

**“The time has not yet come to rebuild
Yahweh’s house”: A Jamesonian Reading
of the book of Haggai.**

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B.Th. (MTC); MTh (Dist.) (PTC)

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

University of Newcastle, NSW

June 2019

This research was supported by an Australian Government Training
Program (RTP) Scholarship

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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Malutafa Faalili

Dedication

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Josey, Maina ma MJ

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Acknowledgements

“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds, I will be glad and exult in you, I will sing praise to your name, O Most High” (Psalm 9:1-2 NRSV)

First and foremost, I wish to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Roland Boer, whose guidance, wisdom, enthusiasm, time, effort and especially the very critical and constructive comments have brought unity and fluency to what started off as disarray and chaos. I am very indebted to you sir. *Faafetai Tele Lava!!!* I would also like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Dr Christina Pettersen, Dr Niall McKay, Professor Terry Lovat, my colleagues and the Doktorklub forum.

I wish to acknowledge the *tapuaiga* of our families and friends all over the world, especially in Samoa. Their prayers, support, and love have continuously encouraged and strengthened us to overcome the struggles of the study life. *Fa’amalo, Fa’afetai le tapuai!!!* I would also like to thank the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Newcastle for all the support and love which has made studying in the Hunter a pleasant experience. *Fa’afetai Tele Lava!!!* I also extend a word of thanks to all who cannot be named at this brief word of thanks but have been part of the journey. May God bless you all!!!

Finally, all would have been in vain if it were not for the patience, love and support of my family and I continuously thank God for blessing me with a beautiful wife and wonderful children. To Maina and MJ, witnessing you grow in this life is a miracle

from God and you are and always will be my source of joy and strength. To my dearest wife Josephine, words and actions will never be able to express in full the gratitude deserving of all the sacrifices you have happily endured for the benefit of my career. You were there from the beginning and once again this is a journey that we have accomplished together; you have borne with me as I have also borne with the demands of academic life. *Faafetai Fina!!!* This project is dedicated to my family with renewed love and gratefulness.

Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
ANE	Ancient Near East
ARJ	<i>Answers Research Journal</i>
BHK	<i>Biblica Hebraica Kittel</i>
BHS	<i>Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
CTS	<i>Chafer Theological Seminary</i>
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
K: NWTS	<i>Kerux – The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary</i>
NAC	The New American Commentary
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary of the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
OT	Old Testament
STS	<i>Second Temple Studies</i>
TDSB	The Daily Study Bible

TOTC	The Old Testament Commentary
TOTL	The Old Testament Library

Abstract

One noticeable element in past studies of the book of Haggai is the emphasis on the historical context and its influence on the text. Even when dealing directly with the text itself, the assumption is that it is a mere window into the history behind it. In the realm of Marxist analysis, the analogy of base and superstructure and its internal relationship between the two parts initially upheld the same logic, so that it became an early orthodoxy in Marxism. However, the metaphor and its idea has since evolved, with the result that the influence is now regarded as a two-way street. Thus, while the historical context and all its struggles and tensions may have influenced and brought life to the written text (furthermore, creative art and culture), the text is now also a source in which those conflicts can be identified. Considering Haggai studies, various arguments have emerged regarding the tensions and conflicts at the time of the text's production, for example, the *golah* community versus the Samaritans, conflicting eschatological interpretations and emphasis, identity crisis and others.

This thesis applies the textual theory of American Marxist Fredric Jameson for a critical reading of the book of prophet Haggai. It will attempt to show that the text has a greater function where it not only *represents* the tensions of the past but attempts to *resolve* the issues on an imaginary level – this is a unique feature of Jameson's theory. Furthermore, the thesis will also argue that the contradictions and conflicts in the text – at the historical level – occur amongst the *golah* community itself, specifically amongst its leaders.

The first chapter introduces Jameson's theory and methodology which the rest of the work shall follow. The second chapter contains the first phase of Jameson's three-tier methodology. The text's greater function as mentioned means the initial focus will be on the text, and here the task will be to search for contradictions and tensions in the form of the text. The third chapter contains the second phase which carries a mediating purpose, i.e. smoothing the transition between the historical issues and that of the text. In other words, this phase deals with ideologies and social class. The third and final phase of the methodology make up the contents of chapter four. The tensions and conflicts that were initially identified at a formal level, mediated through ideologies will at this point be situated in a wider interpretational context, i.e. the economic base which – for Marxism – is the determining factor of society. The economic discussion will focus on modes of production and their impacts on society.

Although the project may have emerged from growing contextual concerns relating to the church in Samoa (and other Pacific Island nations), it is the hope of this research that any conclusions drawn at the end may make a contribution not only to studies of the Haggai and prophetic corpus in the Bible, but also to debates in Marxist criticism.

Introduction

Not much is known about Haggai. Apart from two references in the biblical book of Ezra (5:1 & 6:14) – where Haggai is mentioned as one of the major contributors to the reigniting of the temple rebuilding – all the information there is about Haggai is to be found in the book that carries his name. Here, he is simply known as “Haggai the prophet.” Although some scholars have attempted to locate Haggai’s whereabouts prior to the major event of the return of the exiles from Babylonia, it remains a minor concern amongst Haggai scholarship.¹

Haggai’s ministry takes place within the space of just over three months in the second year of Cyrus the Persian ruler of the time, i.e. 520 BCE. The book itself contains four messages from the prophet: (1) the call to rebuild the temple (Hag. 1:1 – 15); (2) an oracle about the building of the temple (Hag. 2:1 – 9); (3) a series of questions about various matters (Hag. 2:10 – 19); (4) a messianic oracle about the person of Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:20 – 23). Scholars have proposed many themes, and these are just some of the major themes of the book all emerging from the central importance of the rebuilding of *Yahweh’s* temple. Examples of themes include: the priority of worship where the attitude of the people towards the temple represents their attitude towards *Yahweh* their God; moral conditions as Haggai recognizes the splendour of the temple to be an expression

¹ The two suggestions are (1) Haggai was a Judean who remained in Palestine during the exile; (2) that he was amongst those who returned with Zerubbabel from Babylon after exile. Paul L. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 11. Redditt, *Introduction to the Prophets* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2008), 319.

of inner holiness; providence and sovereignty of *Yahweh*; eschatology and the messianic hope for the future.

Compared to other books in the prophetic corpus of the bible, Haggai is quite a short book of only 38 verses. Although this briefness may contribute in the attempt to present a harmonious account with no disruptions, it is but a mere illusion as the text – like many other texts – is not liberated from the presence of conflicts and contradictions that represent the tensions of the historical context that produced it. In fact, a closer assessment of the text – that I have carried out on the Hebrew text – has prompted a special focus on contradictions and tensions as they maintain a strong presence in the text. The obvious question at this point is with regards to the nature and relationship of these textual tensions to that of the real social world in which they were produced.

Most of the scholarly work² on Haggai from sociological perspectives tends to assume that the superstructure or the text is completely determined by the base or context. If we were to employ Marxist terminology to describe the assumption, such a trend would be identified as ‘vulgar Marxist.’ As will be shown in the review of secondary material on Haggai, many have argued that the text simply reflects the social, economic and political environment from which the text emerged. Quite evident in the various proposals for the purpose of the book, these social, economic and political concerns prove to be the paramount issues. While some scholars perceive the conflicts in the text as reflecting tensions between Jews returning from exile and the Samaritans,³

² The reference to scholarly works here is summation of the discussions made in the literature review.

³ Peter Ackroyd, “Studies in the Book of Haggai” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 2 (1951): 163-76; “Studies in the Book of Haggai” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 3 (1952): 151-56. Otto Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of its Results and Problems*. Translated by John Sturdy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 275.

others comprehend the contradictions as reflecting the different understandings of the *eschaton* and the fulfilment of prophecies of former Israelite prophets.⁴

In response to these claims, this thesis will argue two points: first, that the tensions in the text are not merely *representations* of the conflicts and contradictions at the social, economic and political level, but that they function as a *response* aiming to symbolically resolve these real life situations and tensions. Second, to show at a socio-historical level that these tensions and conflicts occurred amongst the *golah* community as a result of the harsh economic conditions of the time of production.

This work will appropriate the textual theory of Marxist critic Fredric Jameson in a critical reading of the biblical book of the prophet Haggai. Jameson's theory, which is presented primarily in *The Political Unconscious*⁵ (henceforth *PU*), takes on board the presupposition that contradictions or contrasting ideologies are a norm in a society, that they exist with a collective understanding that first, despite differences, all are required for a greater good and, second, any ideological voice is always a representation of the collective class from which one belongs. For Jameson, one way these tensions manifest themselves is in cultural expression, such as literature, which often offers "imaginary" ways to resolve contradictions at social and economic levels. Thus, the relationship between text and context is mediated and indirect: a response to a problem, or an answer to a question we do not necessarily have (especially with ancient religious literature). For Jameson – who focusses specifically on narratives – not only are the signs of contradictions and tensions visible in the form of the text, but the purpose of the text itself is to attempt to ease these tensions. Although these

⁴ George Adam Smith. *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*. Vol. 2. (New York / London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1906), 223 - 247.

⁵ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981).

textual tensions represent real conflicts in the social world, the supposed resolutions are accomplished only on a symbolic or imaginary level.⁶ In our case, the chosen text to be examined is the book of the prophet Haggai.

The study commences in chapter one which will be devoted to the discussion of Jameson's theory and methodology. Respectively, the two major sections of this chapter focus on theory and the methodology or the interpretive procedure. In the theoretical section, vital elements of *PU* are discussed such as the idea of literature as a symbolic act and the societal model and the relationship between the base and superstructure. Furthermore, the question of history will also require attention as historical resources or rather the access to history is a major limitation to the studying and interpretation of ancient texts such as the Hebrew bible. Jameson's response to this historical dilemma provides a way around the issue to achieve a reliable discussion of the determining context. Another major theoretical discussion is that of ideologies at all levels. This discussion aims to provide a brief history of the concept and the various nuances in its uses, as well as its functions within society. The discussion will either introduce or remind the reader of the conflicting ideologies that constantly exist in society, especially within the context of social classes. The second section outlines the three-tier methodology of the exegetical process we will follow. These levels make up chapters two through to four, i.e. the political phase, the social phase and the historical phase.

Upon saying this, it must be pointed out that the analysis is not entirely theory driven in the sense that the method functions as the recipe to which the textual analysis strictly follows. Rather the method applied in this reading is a result of a constant

⁶ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*; Also important in the understanding of Jameson's theory is – William C Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to The Political Unconscious* (London: Methuen Publishing, 1984).

interplay and dialogue between the text and method. While the analysis may have commenced with the formulating of key questions based on the Jamesonian approach, an engagement in an extensive textual analysis in light of these questions produced new insights. These insights then required the return to Jameson; to revise and finalize the chapter on theory. In other words, my approach can be seen in two interrelated moves: a) an engagement with Jameson's approach in light of the text, thereby modifying the approach to work better with the Haggai text; and b) deploying this modified approach to bring out certain aspects of the text that have been neglected.

Chapter two shall present the first horizon of the methodology that is also known as the political phase. The long and complex process that aims to provide insight of the historical context of the book of Haggai commences here with the text. The text is treated as a symbolic response to the social contradictions and tensions of its time of production; therefore, the task at this textual level is to identify tensions and conflicts which for Jameson are inscribed within the formal and structural fabric of the text. A formal analysis will thus be the vital task to identify the various co-existent forms and genres and determine their relationship with one another. As mentioned, this is the initial stage of identifying and interpreting the contradictions that are presented in the text.

Chapter three will present the second horizon, also referred to as the social phase. This phase functions as a mediating section between the textual level of the first phase and the historical context of the final phase. As Jameson moves from phase to phase, the interpretive framework widens; i.e. while the conflicting forces were perceived merely within the confines of the text in the first phase, phase two is now concerned with conflicts on a social level, that is, ideology and social class. At this level

the task is to situate the textual findings of phase one with corresponding social contexts. In other words, we are now beginning to identify the various groups and classes responsible for the respective ideologies that are embedded in the text. The determination of these various groups contribute immensely to initial assumptions regarding the historical context and society in which the text was produced.

Chapter four contains the third and final horizon in Jameson's methodology. Also referred to as the historical phase, the interpretive scope is now concerned with the wider context of the economic base, focussing specifically on modes of production. For Marx, the economic context was at the root of many of the tensions and conflicts in society. The task here is to affiliate the classes of the second phase with their respective modes of production. The tension which was embedded in the text – in the text's structure – represents the conflicting modes of production at the time of the text's production. From a historical perspective, these are real social-economic conflicts which the text is supposedly attempting to resolve at an imaginary level.

The final chapter shall present the conclusions of the work. In addition, implications and theological reflections based on the study shall also be brought into account for homiletic purposes.

The conclusions that shall be drawn from the study will be specific to this analysis of the book of Haggai and should not be seen as a representation of the entire prophetic corpus. However, it does provide a case study of an alternative critical approach to apply to prophetic texts in general.

Chapter One

Theory and Methodology

1. Theoretical Considerations

This chapter shall be dedicated to the discussion of the theory and methodology employed in this project. As previously stated, the textual theory and methodology of American Marxist critic – Fredric Jameson – shall be utilized for a political reading of the text of Haggai. This discussion shall be presented in two major parts. The first will discuss Jameson’s textual theory, elaborating and illuminating paramount areas I feel will be vital for the appreciation in full of the outcomes and conclusions of this work. This will be followed by a necessary discussion on the concept of ideology not only because of the central role ideologies play in Marxist theory, but also to narrow in to working definitions and understandings for this work. The second part aims to shed light on the exegetical procedure or methodology to which this work adheres.

1.1. The Political Unconscious

Jameson’s textual theory – *PU* – is no easy endeavour to comprehend especially when compared to the works of fellow Marxist scholars such as Eagleton, Yee, Sneed, Clines, Penchansky, and many others.⁷ While all these works contribute independently

⁷ Whilst Jameson’s theory may have been popular in the United States, the lack of attention it received in Europe is mainly due to difficulty in trying to comprehend Jameson’s theory – Sean Homer, *Fredric Jameson: Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 2.

to the understanding of Jameson's theory, this study is greatly indebted to Boer's *Jameson and Jeroboam*.⁸ In addition to an explanation and expansion on the theoretical dimension, Boer's greatest contribution is presenting a clear and detailed outline of Jameson's three-tier methodology, which has made it easier for new Jamesonian readers – like myself – to follow and apply Jameson's theory to the biblical text.⁹ We shall now discuss the argument of *PU* and its relevance to the study of ancient texts such as the Hebrew Bible.

The term “political unconscious” was coined by Jameson as the way to express the relationship between creative works and their political dimensions. In forming his theory, Jameson points out at the very outset of *PU* the priority of political interpretation over any other interpretive method when dealing with literary texts. For Jameson, political interpretation should be “*the absolute horizon of all reading and interpretation*.”¹⁰ Jameson appropriates Freud's psychoanalytical proposals concerning the role of the unconscious and Lévi-Strauss's anthropological method for interpreting the facial decorations of the Caduveo Indigenous people of South America – both of which shall be elaborated later – to formulate the theory that creative and artistic works can be seen as symbolic solutions to social and cultural tensions and conflicts. In other words, the text is perceived to symbolically resolve real social, political and historical problems.

⁸ Roland Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, Semeia Series, SBL (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 43-98.

¹⁰ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 17.

1.1.1. Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act

To perceive literature in such a manner – as a socially symbolic act – is not easy to comprehend. Inspired by Kenneth Burke's literary theory,¹¹ this is a very complicated element of Jameson's theory. For Jameson, seeing texts as "symbolic acts" can be regarded as the "resolution" of a "contradiction."¹² In other words, the symbolic act was seen as an imaginary response to real social problems. Its complex nature is further highlighted by the understanding that whilst it does not affect the social world directly, it is said to have a subsequent impact on society and the way it operates. The following discussions of important areas of Jameson's theory will assist further in understanding his argument. We shall begin with the influential works of Freud and Lévi-Strauss.

According to Freud's psychoanalytical theory, our behaviours are driven by all sorts of things that happened in our past in which are often not at all conscious in our present. Many of the experiences that influence ourselves today occurred before we were able to form lasting conscious memories. Freud saw that these experiences often left a lasting impact on one's habits, choices and behaviour throughout one's life. In other words, the unconscious mind for Freud was the primary source of human behaviour and this is quite evident in his popular analogy of the iceberg in which the most important part of the mind is the part that cannot be seen. Furthermore, the concept of repression is also vital as for Freud it is a form of defence mechanism that protects one from the unconscious motives and feelings which are deemed unacceptable in the rational of

¹¹ Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), vii – ix. See also Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, third edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

¹² Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 43. See also Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible* (London: T & T Clark International, 2003), 183. Lambert Zuidervaat, "Realism, Modernism, and the Empty Chair," in *Postmodernism: Jameson Critique*, Edited by Douglas Kellner (Washington: Maitsonneuve Press, 1989): 212-214.

conscious self, and also in a social environment.¹³ In other words, the repression is the defence mechanism that enables human beings to survive and function in society. Translated into Jameson's framework, the unconscious becomes the real and unrepresentable social and political context, or rather, the problems and tensions of that context which influence ideology, culture and literature in unexpected ways.

Lévi-Strauss's interpretation of the body paintings of the Caduveo people also has had great impact in the theorizing of the relationship between the text and the social reality.¹⁴ Based on his anthropological field work in Brazil, Lévi-Strauss found that the Caduveo tribe – like neighbouring tribes – existed in a social hierarchy which was constituted of three divisions of classes/castes. It is from this hierarchical system that the relations of domination and political power emerge, portraying tensions and conflicts at a social level between men and the inferior women, the youth in subordination to the elders, and the development of the hereditary aristocratic class. Unlike the neighbouring tribes of Guana and Bororo, the Caduveo tribe did not have a form of resolution to the problems on the social level. Despite the existence of class and hierarchy, Guana and Bororo divided the classes into moieties that transcended the boundaries between the three castes. An example of this resolution is seen in marriage where although such unions between members of different castes were prohibited, marriages between members of different moieties within each caste was encouraged. This acceptance of crossing boundaries between moieties functioned as a form of liberal

¹³ Sigmund Freud, *General Psychological Thought: Papers on Metapsychology* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963): 116-150.

¹⁴ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 77-79. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, translated by John Russell (New York: Criterion Books, 1961), 160-180. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 43-44. William C. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to The Political Unconscious*, Routledge Library Editions: Marxism, Vol.4 (London: Routledge, 2015), 119-122.

tool as it appears to balance out the hierarchical emphasis of the three-caste system by promoting these egalitarian and non-hierarchical values.¹⁵

The Caduveo tribe was not as fortunate in terms of social resolution, but despite its absence it was a continuous dream of the people in which they articulated within themselves and never really formulated in reality. The yearning and dreaming for social resolution reached a state in which imagining the resolution began to have an impact on the people.¹⁶ We noted earlier the process of alienation and how it can become the source of art and literature. For Lévi-Strauss, the facial paintings of the Caduveo women can be perceived as a “phantasm created by a society whose object was to give symbolic form to the institutions it might have had in reality.”¹⁷

One characteristic of the Caduveo paintings noted by Lévi-Strauss was the male/female dualistic element.¹⁸ Focussing on the aesthetic structure, the painting on the face occurred on a different axis to that of the face itself and symbolically represented a resolution to social contradiction. In other words, the oblique symmetrical patterns reflected a formal resolution to the social conflict and tension. For Boer, this contradiction was “comprised of the unresolved patterns of social hierarchy and the relations of domination enabled and produced by such a hierarchy.”¹⁹ Unlike their neighbouring tribes, the Guana and Bororo, the Caduveo had no real solution to ease the problems and therefore turned to art as a means to resolve tensions and contradictions.²⁰ Drawing on Lévi-Strauss, Jameson sought to apply this method to

¹⁵ Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 178-180.

¹⁶ Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 179-180.

¹⁷ Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 179-180.

¹⁸ Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 172

¹⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 43-44.

²⁰ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 78. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 43. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 121.

interpreting texts and other cultural products, in terms of real contradiction(s) to which the text is a symbolic resolution.

1.1.2. Base and Superstructure

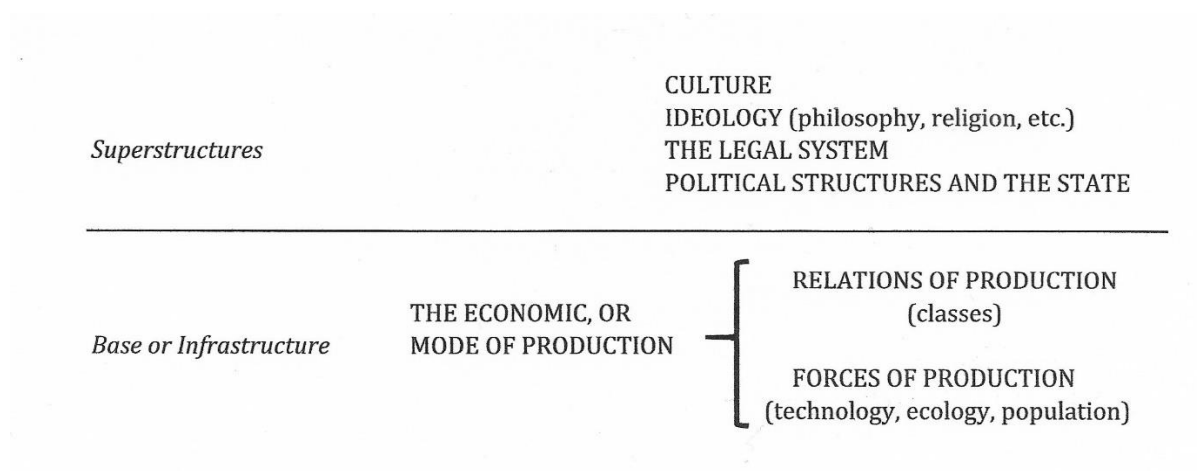
The base and superstructure – within the realm of Marxist theory – make up the two fundamental elements of human society. Many discussions of these elements find root in this key passage from Marx's preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or — this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms — with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic — in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the

contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production.²¹

From this lengthy quotation we shall discuss two major points. First, the concept of the base and superstructure is analogous to the fundamental elements of a building structure: i.e. the base is the foundation and the superstructure is the building that arises on this base. For Marx, the base or the foundation of this model is simply the economic structure of a society. This base comprises of forces of production – which refers to technology, ecology, and the population – and the relations of production which is prominently presented in the form of classes. The superstructure that supposedly arises on top of this foundation are the political and legal domains of society. It is in this section where all cultural and ideological activities can be situated.²² The following diagram has been extracted from Jameson's *PU*, but is also found in Boer's study.²³



Second, it is clear that for Marx in this text, the base determines the superstructure in a one-way relationship; a position that is still upheld by orthodox Marxists. The analogy of the base as foundation and the superstructure above can be

²¹ Karl Marx: from the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*

²² Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 32-33.

²³ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 32. Boer's edited version is found in *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 38.

misleading if one is not careful. The notion of base immediately propels the understanding of something that is static, unmovable and unchangeable, however that is not the case as even the economic base of any society is vulnerable to change and transformation. In fact, there is more activity in the economic base than initially thought especially in terms of internal conflict and contradiction. Marx refers to development in the base that takes place as a result of conflicts and contradictions between the forces and relation of production. In other words, these conflicts are the core and essence of development and transformation, which in effect, leads to the transformation of the entire superstructure. How then does this all relate to Jameson's theory and method?

Although orthodox Marxism argues that the base influences the superstructure, from a literary point of view, the conflicts of the former can be determined and comprehended through the latter. In other words, the real conflicts that occur at the economic base can be explained through signs which occur in the superstructure or text. Therefore, in order for the critic to attempt to grasp the real life contradictions at the base, it is most viable to achieve this through the superstructure; especially when access to the historical realities are very limited, as is the case of a lot of ancient texts, including the Bible. As we shall see later in Jameson's methodology, these two elements also represent the first and third phases in the interpretational process where a second phase functions as the mediator to make the transition from superstructure to base much smoother. For Boer, this second phase is the relations of production.²⁴

²⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 38.

1.1.3. The Question of History

One of the main problems when dealing with the ancient texts such as the Hebrew Bible is the very limited access we do have to the historical events of the time of literary production. Despite the immense contributions of archaeology and extra-biblical material, a complete reconstruction of history appears unachievable and this makes the relationship between history and the text a very complex issue.²⁵ However, Jameson's three working definitions of history is part of the Marxist framework that brings this relationship into a more comprehensible state.

First, for Jameson, History – with the capital “H” – is “the experience of Necessity” which is the “inexorable *form* of events” or in other words an unstoppable path of events that will happen.²⁶ MacKay equates this History with the Lacanian concept of “real” which not only is opposed to the imaginary but is also situated beyond the symbolic meanings of texts.²⁷ Ironically, Eagleton refers to this History as “real history.”²⁸ In addition, for Jameson, History as an “untranscendable horizon needs no theoretical justification.”²⁹ In other words, we cannot escape history, since it is the context in which we all live and move. The understanding of the other nuances of history and their relationship to History will bring more clarity to this discussion.

The second definition is history – with the lower-case “h” – as a small unit of a collective which attempt to represent History, except it will never achieve this goal. The

²⁵ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1976), 70. Homer, *Fredric Jameson*, 39.

²⁶ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 32-33.

²⁷ Niall McKay, "Mark and Literary Materialism: Towards A Liberative Reading For (Post) Apartheid South Africa". (Ph.D. University of Newcastle, 2016), 15.

²⁸ Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 72.

²⁹ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 102.

reason, as Eagleton simply puts it is that this history “enters the text, not least the ‘historical’ text; but it enters it precisely as ideology.”³⁰ This history will always be distorted with the agendas of the various historians and authors. Once again, history here as a small unit can be a fragment and will never be a complete representation of History.

The third history – also lower-case “h” – is denoted as a “genuine philosophy of history.” The starting point of this discussion is the acknowledgement of the overlays between the three nuances of history discussed. This overlay and overlapping relationship then carries through the entire interpretational process at the base levels: i.e. in the political phase with the symbolic act, in the social phase it is generalised in terms of social class, and in the historical phase the overlays are generalised in terms of modes of production. This entire process is seen to bring some form of closure to the question of history by considering the overlaying relationships of these nuances of history as coming close to being genuine, although they will always fall short of an accurate or exact representation of History itself.³¹

Given the above discussion, we can now grasp in general Jameson’s treatment of history as an abstraction. As we shall see in the methodological discussion to follow, the discussion of History is left abstract, only to return in the final phase, functioning as genuine history, i.e. it provides a form of closure in the attempt to reconstruct History, although it will never be an exact representation. Jameson also refers to the idea of “absent cause” (which is always present but either cannot or will be represented) which is important for him in many ways. For example, he argues that capitalism in its entirety

³⁰ Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 72.

³¹ McKay, "Mark and Literary Materialism: Towards A Liberative Reading For (Post) Apartheid South Africa," 17-18.

cannot be represented, but here, the point is that it is also a translation of the Freud's unconscious into Jameson's Marxist framework.

1.2. Ideological Concerns

Another area worth discussing at this point is the concept of ideology and its central role in Marxist theory. This section will discuss ideology and ideological related questions, beginning with a working definition of ideology.

1.2.1. Ideology - Etymology

To date, no single satisfactory definition for ideology has been proposed.³² This work does not propose to solve this problem, but to single out one of the many connotations in order for the reader to grasp the essence of the argument. A brief history of the concept will be provided taking note of the main strands of thought. The functions of ideologies will also be determined in light of these definitions before acknowledging the selected nuance.

Ideology is a construction of the Greek terms *idea* and *logos* to denote "knowledge of ideas."³³ The term emerged during the 18th century French Revolution as '*ideologie*' from French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy to refer to the "science of ideas." The rationale of this new science was to seek out the birth of ideas in an attempt to understand the general necessities of human life. Given an understanding of the

1. ³² Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, new and updated edition (London: Verso, 2007),

³³ William L. Reese, "Ideology," in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, expanded edition, ed. William L. Reese (New York: Humanity Books, 1999), 328.

origins of ideas, there would then be the basis for social and scientific advancement.³⁴ In other words, ideology can give a “measure of freedom” deeming it to be a liberating phenomenon. According to Perkins, “the more we understand ideologies, the more we can control their inescapable effects on how we interpret social reality.”³⁵ The measure of freedom then, is not from ideologies themselves, but rather over the ideological decisions that are made.³⁶ This in general can be seen as a positive or non-pejorative use of the term.

The pejorative notion however, was later introduced when Napoleon Bonaparte in 1812 criticized the impact that Tracy and his followers—whom he referred to as ‘*ideologues*’³⁷—had on the French military defeats.³⁸ The self-crowned French Emperor continued to use the term as such to designate all his enemies, particularly those who upheld a republican ideology.³⁹ This pejorative view was developed further by the philosophers of the 19th century, most notably, Marx and Engels. Reacting against religion, they seemingly equated it with ideology, criticizing it as a source of a ‘false consciousness of reality’⁴⁰ or rather an “inverted consciousness of the world.”⁴¹

³⁴ George Boas, “Ideology,” in *Standard Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophy Library, 1983), 156. See also Alan F. Geyer, *Ideology in America: Challenges to Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 12. Jorge Larraín, *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd, 1979), 17.

³⁵ Richard Perkins, *Looking Both Ways: Exploring the Interface between Christianity and Sociology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 101-102.

³⁶ Perkins, *Looking Both Ways*, 103. Hans Barth also perceived this advantage of ideology as a means for societal developments. — Barth, *Truth and Ideology*, trans. F. Lilge (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 3.

³⁷ Ideologues refer to those who support a particular ideology, especially those who promote, express and represent the ideology or ideologies.

³⁸ David Braybrooke, “Ideology,” in *EP*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York/London: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press/Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1972), 3 & 4: 124-127.

³⁹ Boas, “Ideology,” 156. See also Reese, “Ideology,” 328.

⁴⁰ Braybrooke, “Ideology,” 125. See also Geyer, *Ideology in America*, 13.

⁴¹ Jorge Larraín, *Ideology & Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 12.

1.2.2. Ideology and Religion, Religion and Ideology

We have already touched on Marx and Engels stance regarding religion and ideology. For them, religion was an ideology as it was a source for the distorted view of reality.⁴² For Marx, religion was “the opium of the people.”⁴³ He perceived religion as the product of a class society that conveys a general theory of an abstract world and not historical reality. Religion provided only a temporary remedy and no real solution to problems, and in the process, further promotes the distorted view of the real world.⁴⁴ To further comprehend this distortion, Marx proposes the model of “*camera obscura*.”⁴⁵ Dealing with the economic situation of his time, where the “alienation in class-divided societies”⁴⁶ was of a major concern, Marx perceived religion to be serving the interest of a particular social class, presumably the elite. Despite only being a temporary remedy, religion presented spiritual answers to satisfy the conscience of those who were experiencing suffering and oppression. An example of such spiritual talk is the interpretation of their current situations as religious suffering which would be a form of protests towards the real suffering. Religion had distorted the view of the oppressed

⁴² Braybrooke, “Ideology,” 125. See also Geyer, *Ideology in America*, 13. Larrain, *Ideology & Cultural Identity*, 12.

⁴³ Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” in *On Religion*, ed. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1964), 41-42.

⁴⁴ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” 41-42.

⁴⁵ ‘Camera Obscura’ is the model Marx uses to describe this distortion which would view men and their situations upside down. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I & III*. Edited with an introduction by R. Pascal (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1938), cited in Afereti Uili, “The conflict of Biblical interpretations: towards a resolution in the light of the work of Paul Ricoeur,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1998), 71. —The camera obscura is a visual device. In a ‘dark room’ light from a scene would pass through a hole, hitting a surface where it is reproduced, in colour, and upside-down. It was later developed with the addition of curved lens and mirrors to reflect images onto a viewing surface.

⁴⁶ Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion*, second edition (London: Routledge, 1995), 91.

citizens of reality and their real social conditions. Ideology in this sense were a set of beliefs that expressed what people are led to think, in contrast to what is true.

In this light, we return to Jameson and his appropriation of Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion and recovery. In dealing with the positive aspect of interpretation, Jameson moves beyond Ricoeur's limited focus on the interactions between individual subjects to a more collective focus. According to Boer, this is a development of a "fruitful interaction between Marxism and religion" as Jameson has now provided room for "religious concerns."⁴⁷

First, the function of religion for Jameson is quite distinct in pre-capitalist and capitalist societies. Whereas, religion was the determining factor in the former, it was privatized in the latter.⁴⁸ For Boer, not only was religion the cultural dominant in the pre-capitalist society, but it represented what later became to be known as ideology in capitalist society. We note here that the concept of religion as the cultural dominant will have an important role in the third phase of the analytical process. Furthermore, the relationship between religion and ideology is further established by Jameson. Religion represented not an individual but a collectively united people and, for Boer, it was through religious and theological debates in which the political differences of the people were exposed. Therefore, theological reflection was the voice of the collective group in class struggles, the very context in which ideologies emerged.⁴⁹ Ideologies and class struggles – as we shall see in this work – are the essence of the second phase of Jameson's methodology.

⁴⁷ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 64-65. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 284-285.

⁴⁸ Boer dwells on Milton's (1981) study on the importance of religion for Marxism to emphasise the idea of religion as a dominant factor in society. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 65-66.

⁴⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 65-66.

Second, for Jameson, the Asiatic mode of production⁵⁰ is the context in which the interpretations of religion take place. We may be reminded that for Jameson, the association of “Marxism with religion is a two-way street,” and while we have discussed the positive front, the negative front perceives religion as a “false consciousness” and a distorted view of reality. The relationship between this question of religion and the mode of production will become clear as it will be employed in the third phase of the analysis.⁵¹

1.2.3. Ideology and Utopia

Up to this point, ideologies are still deemed to be associated with the elite class of society. However, with Vladimir Lenin – a political theorist and eventually head of Soviet Russian (1917-1922) and Soviet Union (1922-1924) governments – a new distinction was introduced with the opposing concepts of “bourgeois” and “socialist” ideologies.⁵² Lenin was a devout Marxist and vigorous believer in a communist state. According to Lenin’s Marxist view, humanity would eventually achieve an egalitarian state where class, exploitations, alienation no longer had control over the average worker of a society.⁵³ For Lenin however, a prerequisite to achieving his dream communist state is for Russia to become a socialist state. In other words, Lenin argues that the communist party itself needed an ideology, and this socialist ideology would function to expose the bourgeois ideologies of the upper-class citizens.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Also known as the “tributary mode of production” and discussed in detail in chapter four.

⁵¹ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 285. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 68.

⁵² Geyer, *Ideology in America*, 13. See also Lenin: A Biography (), 84-86.

⁵³ Dmitri Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy*, translated by Shukman Harold (London: Harper Collins, 1994), 206.

⁵⁴ Mark Sandle, *A Short History of Soviet Socialism* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 35.

At the centre however, of Lenin's socialist ideology was the "dictatorship of the proletariat" – drawn from Marx and Engel⁵⁵ – where the working class is sole holder of political power. The functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat was to establish the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class with the purpose of stamping out the oppressors. In addition, they would promote and expand a democratic system that benefited the poor and the general population rather than just the rich. As far as the methods of achieving their goals, the transition from a capitalist to communist economy would be achieved through force.⁵⁶ In this light, it is evident that "conflicting ideologies" within a society are acknowledged. Furthermore, it is also obvious that the push against the oppressive capitalist system categorises Lenin and the socialist ideals as utopian in nature.

Karl Mannheim proposes four different types of 'utopia,' however for our purpose, only one will be discussed.

The socialist-communist utopia that envisioned a new egalitarian order upon the breakdown of capitalist culture and institutions.⁵⁷

This concurs with the understandings of Marx and Lenin. Mannheim believes that 'utopia' is a vision to replace the current power structures with an ideal alternative. Utopia functions to unmask ideologies of the opposition. For example, Marx's utopian vision of "communism" was an attempt to overthrow the capitalist ideology. Paul Ricoeur sheds more light in the distinguishing of the two.

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, 'The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850', in *Marx and Engels Collected Works* vol. 10, 45–145 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978 [1850]), 127; Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', in *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, vol. 24, 75–99 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1989 [1875]), 95.

⁵⁶ Christopher Hill, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1971), 86.

⁵⁷ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, Haecourt, Brace and Co., 1936), 240.

Ideologies are, for the most part, professed by the ruling class and denounced by the under-privileged classes: utopias are generally supported by the rising classes. Ideologies look backwards, utopias look forwards. Ideologies accommodate themselves to a reality which they justify and dissimulate; utopias directly attack and explode reality.⁵⁸

For Ricoeur, ideologies presumably refer to an existing dominant ideology or ideologies in a society, while utopia would technically refer to the ideology or ideologies that contradict the dominant. In terms of the contradicting parties proposed by Lenin, an existing dominant ideology would stem from the elite classes, while utopia is the ideology of the lower class.

From the contradicting connotations discussed, the function of ideology would then depend on which side of the conflict one is situated. We can formulate two major functions of ideology. First, the pejorative notion of ideology—as seen in the understandings of Marx and Engels—functioned to *justify* and *preserve* the status quo.⁵⁹ Ideology was seen as a manipulative tool that presents a false consciousness of reality. Yee's definition of ideology also portrays this understanding:

As a complex system of values, ideas, pictures, images, and perceptions, ideology motivates men and women to “see” their particular place in the social order as natural, inevitable, and necessary.⁶⁰

In other words, this perception of ideology functions to legitimize what is; i.e. current political, social, and economic conditions. To ensure that the elite maintain their status with all the prestige and power that comes with it, lower class citizens remain as

⁵⁸ Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. & trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: University, 1981), 240.

⁵⁹ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” 41-42.

⁶⁰ Gale A. Yee, “Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body,” in *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 148. See also Eagleton, *Ideology*, 1-2.

lower-class citizens. This understanding of ideology encourages these lower-class citizens to accept their low status as the way things should be. Such ideologies would normally stem from these upper-class groups as Ricoeur has pointed out.

Second, the non-pejorative notion which falls in line with Mannheim's concept of utopia functions in opposition to ideology as discussed above. Utopias are ideologies that unmask existing dominant ideologies within a society. Politically, this non-pejorative ideology aims for transformation and change of current systems of a society. They function to *correct* oppressive political, social, and economic systems. To take up once again Ricoeur's perspective on these contradicting ideologies, the non-pejorative notion would normally be from "rising classes," or rather the "under-privileged."

In both functions we can see the influence and power that ideologies have within a society. It can motivate people to take a certain standpoint, and accordingly to move in a certain direction. To one extreme, it can motivate people to accept the status quo even though it contradicts their interests, to the other, it can also motivate people to make a stand against the status quo. So, utopia may be reinterpreted as an opposing ideology, for those seeking liberation.

A twist worth noting in this discussion is that the capitalist ideology would have been considered by capitalist supporters as their utopia.⁶¹ In this sense, utopia would also function as an ideology, depending from where one is situated within society, that is, one's utopia can be perceived by others as an ideology. Utopia can be considered in the simplest sense, an ideology that aims to be the dominant in society. Jameson maintains this understanding following Ernst Bloch's ideal of hope or "Utopian

⁶¹ Geyer, *Ideology in America: Challenges to Faith*, 16.

Impulse.”⁶² The crucial question, as Bloch asks, is “for whose benefit?”⁶³ Thus, for the dominant ideology of capitalism, utopia would be the ultimate realisation of global capitalism and an unhindered capitalist market economy. By contrast, the ideology preferred by those who oppose such an agenda becomes a utopia of an alternative society. Another way of putting this is as a ruling class ideology versus the opposing ideology of exploited classes. In this light, we can see that for Jameson the concepts of ideology and utopia were inseparable although they continue to remain distinct.

Jameson maintains that the two concepts represent a complete interpretational process. It was noted that orthodox Marxism perceived the relationship between the base and superstructure as one-way direction with the base determining the superstructure. From an ideological perspective, this would mean that the superstructure would provide the distorted view of reality; therefore, culture would be seen as an ideological mechanism. As we have already indicated – especially in Yee’s work – this one-dimensional movement from base to superstructure would be the major assumption behind ideological criticism.⁶⁴ Jameson perceives the orthodox process as incomplete, and follows the trend of more unorthodox argument that sees the movement between the base and superstructure as a two-way street. Referring to this as the dialectic of ideology and utopia (which is inspired by Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of suspicion and recovery)⁶⁵, the initial movement from base to superstructure is maintained as the ideological interpretation while the process from superstructure to

⁶² Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 286-288. Homer, *Fredric Jameson*, 95-96.

⁶³ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 1. Translated by Neville Placie, Stephen Placie and Paul Knight (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 150-158.

⁶⁴ Gale A. Yee, “Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body,” in *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, second edition, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 141-143.

⁶⁵ Roland Boer, *Criticism of Religion: On Marxism and Theology, II*, Historical Materialism Book Series, Vol 22, ed. Paul Blackledge (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 31-34. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 60-63.

the base would be utopian in nature.⁶⁶ The importance of this dialectical relationship is clear as while ideologically the current systems in place and the maintaining of the status quo would be the ideological intentions of the dominant represented by the more traditional movement from base to superstructure. On the other hand, the utopian intention of the dominated would be to expose the distorted reality, which in effect, would be represented by the movement from the superstructure to the base. This is the main movement employed in Jameson's methodology which shall be utilized to analyse the biblical text.

To return to the focus of Jameson's theory and methodology, the superstructure – in our case the biblical text – is a symbolic resolution to contradictions and tensions of the base. The task then of the cultural critic is to find the means of reconstructing the original problem for which the text as a symbolic act is a solution.

In the recent past, a variety of scholarly works have either reviewed⁶⁷ and-or utilized aspects of Jameson's theory. Humanitarian, political and social issues have been scrutinized, criticized and developed in the works of Blanus, ⁶⁸ Williams,⁶⁹ McAfee,⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 58-64. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 281-299.

⁶⁷ The following are reviews and further commentaries on Jameson and his work. Ulf Schulenberg, "Fredric Jameson's American Neo-Marxism and the Dialectics of Totality and Difference." *American Studies*. Vol. 46, No. 2 (2001), 281 – 299. Cornel West, "Fredric Jameson's Marxist Hermeneutics." *Boundary 2*. Vol. 11, No. ½ (Autumn 1982 – Winter 1983), 177 – 200. Peter Osborne, "A Marxism for the Postmodern? Jameson's Adorno." *New German Critique*. Vol. 56, Special Issue on Theodore W. Adorno (Spring – Summer 1992), 171 – 192. Ethan Knapp, "Reading Allegory in a Secular Age: Mid-Century Theology and the Allegoresis of Frye and Jameson." *Exemplaria: Medieval, Early Modern, Theory*. Vol. 26, Nos. 2-3 (Summer / Fall 2014), 163 – 177. Robert Scholes, "Interpretation and Narrative: Kermode and Jameson." *Text and Critics II* (Spring 1984), 266 – 278.

⁶⁸ Nebojsa Blanus, "Political Unconscious of Croatia and the EU: Tracing the Yugoslav Syndrome through Fredric Jameson's Lenses." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*. Vol. 16, No. 2 (2014), 196 – 222.

⁶⁹ Adebayo Williams, "Ritual and the Political Unconscious: The Case of Death and the King's Horseman." *Research in African Literature*.

⁷⁰ Noelle McAfee, *Democracy and the Political Unconscious* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008).

and Goldstein.⁷¹ Foley deals with African-American literature and exposes obscure contradictions within biographical texts.⁷² Bizzell discusses the crucial influence of Jameson on compositional studies.⁷³ Goldberg deals with “renaissance” literature⁷⁴ and Hawlin examines the Political Unconscious in poetry – focusing specifically on Robert Browning’s *Men and Women* – exposing how politics takes centre stage in the poet’s relationship with his wife.⁷⁵ Fuchs uses Jameson in her development of Hebrew Feminist criticism.⁷⁶ The importance of cognitive science⁷⁷ as a metaphor in Jameson’s hermeneutical process is also displayed in the works of Mirrlees,⁷⁸ Thomas Crane,⁷⁹ and Kim.⁸⁰ Finally at this point is the importance of the studies that debate the “utopian”

⁷¹ Philip Goldstein, “Humanism and Politics of Truth” *Boundary 2*. Vol. 12/13, Vol. 12, no. 3 – Vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring – Autumn 1984), 235 – 257.

⁷² Barbara Foley, “Biography and the Political Unconscious: Ellison, Toomer, Jameson and the Politics of Symptomatic Reading.” *Biography* 36.4 (Fall 2013), 649-671.

⁷³ Patricia Bizzell, “Fredric Jameson and Composition Studies.” *JAC* Vol. 16, No. 3 (1996), 471 – 487.

⁷⁴ Jonathan Goldberg, “The Politics of Renaissance Literature: A Review Essay.” *English Literary History*. Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 1982), 514 – 542.

⁷⁵ Stefan Hawling, Love Among the Political Ruins: 1848 and the Political Unconscious of Men and Women.” *Victorian Poetry*. Vol. 50. No. 4 (Winter 2012), 503 – 520.

⁷⁶ Esther Fuchs, “Feminist Hebrew Literary Criticism: The Political Unconscious.” *Hebrew Studies*, 48 (2007), 196 – 216.

⁷⁷ “Cognitive Mapping” is very central to Jameson as it makes the link between our individualism and the more collective or global element of the world. In other words, it provides a way of linking the most intimately local – our particular path through the world – and the most global – the crucial features of our political planet (Collin MacCabe, 1995). This strategy aims to provide part of a solution to the limited information on historical contexts, and in effect ensures that the limited resource are sufficient to produce a map to assist the critic’s political and economic analysis. Jameson uses Greimas’ semiotic square to find the central ideological contradictions of a text.

⁷⁸ Tanner Mirrlees, “Cognitive Mapping or, the Resistant Element in the Work of Fredric Jameson: A Response to Jason Berger.” *An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory & Practice*. Vol. 8, (2005), 11.

⁷⁹ Mary Thomas Crane, “Surface, Depth, and Spatial Imaginary: A Cognitive Reading of the Political Unconscious.” *Representations* Vol.108, No. 1 (Fall 2009), 76 – 97.

⁸⁰ Jaecheol Kim, “Cognitive Cartography in the Neocolonial World: Jameson’s ‘Third-World Literature’ and Ngugi’s *Petals of Blood*.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*. Vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer 2013), 184 – 206.

element of Jameson's work. These include the efforts of Moylan,⁸¹ Alexander⁸² and Boer⁸³ just to name a few.

More specific to our purposes however, are the works of biblical scholars who have utilized Jameson's theory and methodology; they are Penchansky,⁸⁴ Jobling,⁸⁵ Sneed,⁸⁶ Boer,⁸⁷ Clines,⁸⁸ Yee,⁸⁹ Bernier,⁹⁰ McKay⁹¹ and Petterson.⁹² The works of Penchansky, Bernier, McKay and Pettersen employ an element of Jameson's theory, but I wish to discuss more in detail Jobling, Sneed and Boer who make use of Jameson's three-tier methodology. Also relevant to this discussion is Clines, although he appropriates only the first two levels of Jameson's method. Despite Jameson favouring in this case the movement from text to context, Yee's approach from extrinsic to intrinsic

⁸¹ Tim Moylan, "Introduction: Jameson and Utopia." *Utopian Studies*. Vol. 9, No. 2 (1998), 1 – 7.

⁸² Bryan Alexander, "Jameson's Adorno and the Problem of Utopia." *Utopian Studies*. Vol. 9, No. 2 (1998), 51 – 57.

⁸³ Roland Boer, "Religion and Utopia in Jameson." *Utopian Studies*. Vol. 19, No. 2 (2008), 285 – 312.

⁸⁴ Penchansky's analysis of the book of Job is amongst the earlier, he utilizes in conjunction the theories of Jameson and Pierre Machery in the endeavour to trace ideological and theological conflicts in an elite society. - *The Betrayal of God: Ideological Conflict in Job* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990).

⁸⁵ David Jobling, "Deconstruction and the Political Analysis of Biblical Texts: A Jamesonian Reading of Psalm 72." In *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*, Semeia 59. Ed. David Jobling, Tina Pippin. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 95 – 127.

⁸⁶ Mark Sneed, "Qohelet and his 'vulgar' critics." *The Bible and Critical Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2004).

⁸⁷ Roland Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*. SBL Semeia Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

⁸⁸ David J. A. Clines, "Haggai's Temple Constructed, Deconstructed and Reconstructed" in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 68-69.

⁸⁹ Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body." (2007), 138-160.

⁹⁰ Bernier emphasizes the 'historical materialist' element of Jameson's theory in combination with Julian Jayne's cognitive theory to analysis John's Gospel. - "The Consciousness of John's Gospel: A Prolegomena to a Jaynesian – Jamesonian Approach." *The Bible and Critical Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (June 2010).

⁹¹ McKay deals with the Gospel of Mark. He employs Jameson's 'dialectic sublation' in an approach which also features Marxist literary critic Terry Eagleton. - "Mark And Literary Materialism: Towards A Liberative Reading For (Post) Apartheid South Africa". Ph.D. University of Newcastle, 2016.

⁹² Petterson's efforts on John's gospel appropriates Jameson's methods in literary analysis, metacommentary and history as she deals with the relationship between reality and the representation of that reality, i.e. the historical events of the gospel and the written Word. - *From Tomb to Text: Pleromatic Presence and the Body of Jesus in the Book of John* (London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2016), 10 -13.

proves the persisting relevance of the traditional movement from base to superstructure. This approach will be very useful in the third and final phase of Jameson's methodology.

2. Three Phase Methodology

The interpretive methodology consists of three levels or – as Jameson calls them – horizons of analysis. As mentioned earlier, this work is indebted to Boer's study and will follow closely the blueprint provided for a Jamesonian analysis.⁹³ In each horizon, Boer appropriates the base and superstructure model with a mediating interpretive section in the analysis.

2.1. Horizon One – The Political Phase

The first horizon – also referred to as the political phase – grasps the text as a symbolic act, an imaginary response to a real social problem.⁹⁴ Thus, the task of the critic in this first section of the analysis is the attempt to understand the symbolic act through which the text responds to history.

2.1.1. Superstructure – Formal Contradictions

While ideological issues will be the essence of the second horizon, it must be noted at this point that its presence and function is already beginning to impose itself

⁹³ Jameson briefly summarizes the methodology before discussing more in detail – *The Political Unconscious*, 75. Despite its brief explanation on the three-level methodology, Jobling maybe credited as the first (or amongst the first) to appropriate the entirety of Jameson's methodology. Boer however, provides us with a clear and detailed commentary on Jameson's very complex theory and process. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 43-98. See also Jobling, "Deconstruction and the Political Analysis of Biblical Texts," 96-98.

⁹⁴ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 76. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44.

on the interpretational process. The fact that the text is considered as a symbolic act attempting to resolve contradictions is ideological in nature as the resolution does not omit the problem but merely papers over it. Going back to the discussion of the Caduveo people, this is where the resolution is considered imaginary. The task then, is to locate the main contradiction in the text, to find that very point where the texts fails to follow the logic or the thematic norm. Like Jameson, Boer understands that the essential role of ideology is to be revealed in the text's aesthetic structure rather than the conscious objectives of the author.⁹⁵ Therefore, the analysis of the text at this point will focus on form and structure with the purpose of identifying "traces of the ideological of the imaginary resolution which has taken place."⁹⁶

Although the focus of this section is on form and form analysis, form criticism as a means of interpreting the Hebrew text serves this work particularly on a theoretical level more than its practical application. In other words, the distinction made between form and genre will be of great importance to this section, especially in the attempt to compare and analyse not only the relationships between the various genres within a form, but the relationship between the genre(s) and the form.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 55 - 56.

⁹⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44.

⁹⁷ The contemporary form critic no longer deals with small literary units classified by their form, but larger units which may contain various forms—or genres as recently considered—which may have been appropriated by the composer suiting a specific setting. Thus, a unit or form would no longer present a single genre but a unique combination of genres aimed at a specific setting; that is, that of the author or authors. In other words, form refers to the distinct devising of a text or unit while genre refers to the principles of language and expression found within this unit. Marvin A. Sweeney, "Form Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, revised edition, ed. Steven L. McKenzie, Stephen R. Hayes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 58-60.

2.1.2. Interpretation – Antinomy

This section appropriates the findings of the superstructure. The task then moves from the identification of the formal contradiction to the search for antinomies. An antinomy, according to Jameson, is a “logical scandal or double bind, the unthinkable and the conceptually paradoxical, that which cannot be unknotted by the operation of pure thought,”⁹⁸ At this point, Greimas’s semiotic square as means of analysis comes into play. Not only does it contribute by articulating the ideological oppositions and antinomies in the text, but it also functions to generate initial reflections and discussion of these tensions on a more social level.⁹⁹

Another important aspect that surfaces at this point of the analysis is the determining of the strategies of containment. Jameson discusses strategies of containment as part of his treatment of Lukács’s ideal of totality.¹⁰⁰ According to Boer, Jameson’s understanding of this concept “refers to the power of a narrative ideology to project the illusion that it has said all there is to say, that the account is complete.”¹⁰¹ While strategies in the realm of philosophy are intellectual, they are formal in the case of narratives. Jameson purpose in this analysis is to expose the containment strategies or narrative frameworks that conveyed the illusion of totality and completion. Most importantly, the process dialectically worked to repress the social and cultural breakdown and failure – in other words History – which were the very reasons for the emergence of the text in the form of art, literature, etc.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 82-83. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 48.

⁹⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser*, 85-89.

¹⁰⁰ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 52-53.

¹⁰¹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 49.

¹⁰² Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 93. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 49.

2.1.3. Base – History as Absent Cause

The aim at the base level is to relate these antinomies to real contradictions or political history. However, the task is more complicated than it appears. It is here where Jameson appears to contradict himself, i.e. while initially suggesting that the political history was easily accessible, he later concludes that historical context should be reconstructed from the text itself.¹⁰³ For Boer, “Jameson is ultimately ahistorical, despite his desire to historicize as every opportunity.”¹⁰⁴ This in effect is how Jameson deals with the problem of limited access to history. This is important for analysis of the Hebrew Bible as without the occasional findings of archaeology, access to the political history appears possible only through the content of the text itself. Thus, perceiving history as an “absent cause” is more beneficial for the analysis of the biblical texts. In fact, this applies to the base sections of all levels, however, as the context of each level widens in the process, history eventually returns in the final level.¹⁰⁵

2.2. Horizon Two – The Social Phase

The second horizon – also referred to as the social phase – expands the viewing field from narrow political history to focussing on class struggle as a determinant of the text.¹⁰⁶ In other words, the social phase perceives the text as an utterance in the discourse of a particular social class, which is seen in a certain relationship to other social classes. Thus, the social problems to which the text responds are seen as determined and dominated by the producer's social class position. The social phase is

¹⁰³ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 82.

¹⁰⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 52.

¹⁰⁵ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 52.

¹⁰⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 53.

perceived to be the allegorical key between the first and third phases.¹⁰⁷ While in the first phase the analysis of the text focussed on form to identify ideological antinomies that are mediation of real social resolutions, this section's focus on society prepares the transition to the final and wider base of history in terms of modes of production.

2.2.1. Superstructure - Ideologemes

The superstructural concern at this second level is ideology and the understanding of the text is in terms of ideology. Whereas in the first horizon the major unit of analysis was the symbolic act and focus on form, here, the focus of analysis is on "ideologemes."¹⁰⁸ Ideologeme is a favourite term of Jameson's and is defined as "the smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes."¹⁰⁹ The task here is to trace and identify ideologemes in the text. The connection between concept and the narrative is exposed as the ideologeme acts as a mediator between the two. Focus will also be the structure of text as, according to Jameson, the larger class discourse is structured around ideological units. Thus, this section not only aims to locate but also analyse the ideologemes to decipher their social and historical content and message.

Finally, these ideologemes have two major functions, "legitimation and subversion," where the former is the purpose and struggle of the ruling class while the latter is associated with the ruled class.¹¹⁰ In other words, the ruling class strives to legitimize and maintain their status as dominant, while the ruled class strive to

¹⁰⁷ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 53.

¹⁰⁸ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 76. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 54-56.

¹⁰⁹ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 76.

¹¹⁰ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 56-57.

undermine the dominating power. If the biblical text is perceived as a symbolic act responding to resolve social tensions and contradictions, the presence of opposing ideologemes should be evident, even if they may only exist in traces and fragments. We have already touched on this ideological relationship in the dialectic of ideology and utopia above. So, we aim to identify units representing the dominant ideology of the ruling class and traces or fragments of the utopian view of the ruled class.

2.2.2. Interpretation – Ideological Message

Here, we pick up on the small units or fragments sustained from the first horizon – which are now discussed further in terms of ideologemes¹¹¹ – and identify other occurrences within the text. The assumption here is that these ideological features should not be seen as representing solitary voices but rather that they point beyond themselves to the class struggle from which they emerged in the beginning. Our task then is to discuss the conflicting ideological messages that each ideologeme represents in the text. We have already touched on the mediating roles each interpretative section plays in each level; this function is also clear here as we move from the focus on ideologemes to identifying them with the respective social class they represent. The ideological message links the two.¹¹²

2.2.3. Base – Social Class

The base section deals with society, especially class which is a core element of society, mediating between the base and superstructures. Class for Jameson is a

¹¹¹ Ideologeme is defined as: “the smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes.” Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 76.

¹¹² Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 69.

relational concept; thus there will always be the presence of the dichotomic “other” i.e. polemic partner, e.g. master and slave. These relations take two forms, i.e. the ruling class attempting to suppress those ruled or the continual appropriation and neutralizing of the opposition’s efforts in order to maintain the status quo – which maybe much more beneficial to the ruling in various ways.¹¹³ The task therefore at this stage is to identify the voices of the opposing classes. Logically the analysis will commence with identifying of the dominant class before the interpretation moves to recover the voices that have been silenced or co-opted. Locating hints that appear to present something totally different from the obvious message, fragmentary traditions and narratives of popular culture can also function towards this goal.¹¹⁴

2.3. Horizon Three – The Historical Phase

The third horizon – also referred to as the historical phase – concludes the interpretational process. Similar to the expansion from the political to the social phase, the horizon once again widens as the analysis now focuses on history as a whole. The operative unit at this level is “modes of production,” which refer to the comprehensive socio-economic structures of an era.¹¹⁵ Here is where the return of history occurs but in the form of modes of production, which becomes an abstract concept in which the analysis attempts to identify the tensions and contradictions.¹¹⁶ At this level, the formal and structural dimensions of the text makes a return but will be interpreted differently from the first phase.

¹¹³ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 76-77.

¹¹⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 69.

¹¹⁵ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 75-76.

¹¹⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 79. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 97.

2.3.1. Superstructure - Figurations

For Jameson – inspired by Althusser’s concept of social formation – there are no actually existing pure modes of production in society; however, social formation continues to show signs of both residue and emerging social forms. These social forms leave signs or footprints on the text which Jameson refers to as “ideology of form.”¹¹⁷ These ideologies of form are shaped by what Jameson refers to as “cultural revolutions,” the process of reshaping of cultural forms that takes place in the transition from one mode of production to another.¹¹⁸ At this superstructural level then, the analysis will be focussed on tracing these signs and footprints of the coexisting modes of production. Boer refers to these signs under the label “figurations,” which denotes how “various forms represent their respective modes of production.”¹¹⁹ While the search for figurations will be the main task here, the discussion of cultural revolution will appear at the base level in close association with the revealing and discussion of the dominant mode of production.

2.3.2. Interpretation – Contradicting Modes of Production

For Boer, the transition from superstructure to base is quite smooth that the mediating interpretive section may not be needed.¹²⁰ In other words, the identification of the figurations and their functions within the text already represents the discussion of the contradiction between the modes of production. This is the purpose of the interpretive stage: to search for the contradictions as expressed in the cultural change.

¹¹⁷ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 76, 98-99. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 79-80.

¹¹⁸ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 100.

¹¹⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 80.

¹²⁰ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 93.

In this analysis, this section is maintained and will function to provide a more detailed discussion of the contradicting modes of production. The superstructural treatment of the representations of these modes of productions shall be limited to the role of identification.

2.3.3. Base – Culture and the Mode of Production

In terms of the relationship between the various modes of production, Jameson acknowledges the coexistence of various modes of productions that operate at different strengths, In other words, while there is a dominant mode of production, there are also those which are in the stage of either phasing out or emerging.¹²¹ The aim then of this section is to identify and discuss the dominant mode of production. As mentioned earlier, one way to achieve this goal will be to commence with the discussion of the cultural dominant.¹²² Also relevant to this discussion is Jameson's understanding of history as an "absent cause," i.e. despite its inaccessible nature, the effects of history can be felt through the text. Furthermore, as already discussed above, History which had be abstract in nature now makes its return as history to represent History despite its limitations.

3. Summary

It must be noted that this discussion of the methodology was written after the analysis of Haggai, so my treatment of it has been shaped in light of the needs of that

¹²¹ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 95.

¹²² Boer provides a chart of the various modes of productions and their respective cultural dominants. See Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 88.

analysis. Therefore, I have been selective of the various areas I feel required further attention to assist with the understanding of Jameson's very complex perspectives. Despite my presentation focussing on two major areas, many other important talking points of Jameson's theory appear sporadically as part of this chapter as a whole. The two necessary points of interests were Jameson's *PU* and the perception of literature as a socially symbolic act, and the ever-complex phenomenon of ideology.

The second section outlined the process in which the analytical exercise will follow, and this is the task of the following chapters. The three-tier methodology commences with the political phase which is also associated with the superstructure or infrastructure of society. In the analysis of the ancient text such as the book of Haggai, the political phase deals with the Hebrew text which according to Jameson is a symbolic response to social tensions and contradictions. Furthermore, as archaeological study and finds are the main source of any attempt to reconstruct the historical context of ancient texts such the bible, the only other window through which we can attempt some form of contact with history is through the text itself. Thus, it is the task of this phase to identify tensions and contradictions in the form and structure of the text which is also the initial step of a process towards the historical issue(s). Following Boer's treatment of the method, each phase also assumes the base and superstructure with a mediating section as the model for interpretation. While the superstructural level deals with formal contradictions, it is mediated to the realm of ideologies through antinomies. Greimas's semiotic analysis becomes the essential tool not only to lock in the main antinomy, but it also begins discussions of tensions on a more social level – which is elaborated on in the next phase. Another important element that appears here is the discussion on containment strategies and how the text provides the illusion of

completeness and harmonious relationships. The base section that deals with the political context treated as an abstract cause. The historical question is suspended to be discussed at a later time.

The second phase is the social phase in which the question of ideologies and social class become the focal point of interests. The phase commences with the identifying fragments or rather small units that represent certain ideologies known as ideologemes. As representatives of conflicting ideologies in the text, conflicting ideologemes will also be expected. As we shall see in the analysis in chapter three, we see tension between royal, imperial and familial ideologemes. Although this phase may have not required a mediating section from ideologemes to the discussion of social class, we have utilized the section to initiate certain discussions on the relationship between the three ideals of the superstructure and the institution of the temple which is very central to the message of the book of Haggai. The importance of the temple will also be useful in deliberating the possible dominant and dominated groups, especially – as Weber has suggested – when there also seemed to be factions within the classes themselves. We shall be dealing with the question of who is to benefit from the promoting of the building of *Yahweh's* temple? And who would be at a disadvantage?

The final phase is the historical phase which is defined in terms of the economic context and the focus on modes of production. Unlike the first two phases, this section is better served commencing with the base section that discusses the cultural dominant and the associated dominant mode of production. Once determined, the superstructural emphasis is about identifying and discussing residue of past or emerging modes of production that are constantly locked in conflict with the dominant mode of production. In other words, the search is for figurations which in the analysis shows up in the text in

two ways, i.e. through the royal undertone in the text and most importantly through those vital words of rejecting the work of the temple (Hag 1:2) which totally disrupts the illusion of completeness and harmony in the text. Finally, a detailed discussion of the conflicting modes of productions take place, not only do they function as a critical piece of the puzzle that makes all that had gone before more understandable, but it also opens up avenues for further discussions on various issues.

Chapter Two

Horizon One – The Political Phase

The first horizon / political phase deals with the text as a symbolic act which is designed to resolve contradictions.¹²³ Given that these contradictions and tensions eventually represent social struggles and in the same breath opposing ideologies in society, both Jameson and Boer believe the essential role of ideology is to be revealed in the text's aesthetic structure rather than the conscious objectives of the author.¹²⁴ Thus structural analysis will be an important part of this section as we identify how the authors or redactors have woven together the material to serve their purposes and interests. We shall commence however, with identifying the formal contradictions in the text which is testament to the underlying social tension in which the text attempts to resolve. In remaining faithful to the patterns of tensions and conflicts in society, we will also point out a dominant and dominated form. We shall focus in more detail on the formal relationship and its impact on the text. A third form that will then be discussed plays the role of attempting to resolve the formal contradiction while at the same time, functioning as a containment strategy which shall be expanded on later in the process. In the mediating interpretive section we shall be dealing with the transition from the formal contradiction to a more ideological opposition, or rather to search for the main antinomy. This is where the use of Greimas's semiotic square shall be important as its

¹²³ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 75. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44. Sneed, "Qohelet and his Vulgar Critics," 3. Jobling, "Deconstruction and the Political Analysis of Biblical Texts," 96 – 97.

¹²⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 55 - 56.

semiotic analysis transitions from the text to open up discussions on social classes and society, but it also sets us up for the final point concerning strategies of containment. Note that the base shall not be deployed at this level – the chronicle-like occurrences of day-to-day events – since these are well-nigh inaccessible for biblical texts like Haggai. On this matter, although the dating formulae give the impression of specificity, we will interpret them as literary features.

1. Studies on Haggai

From the outset, redaction and form critical analysis have been the central foci in studies of the book of Haggai. There was a general agreement amongst scholars concerning the various layers¹²⁵ in the book, and respectively, a variety of forms which were possibly associated with the various stages of the material's transmission. In other words, there was a conformity regarding the text's journey from its oral form to the written. Within the prophetic arena, this concerns the transformation from oracles to narrative or chronicle form. Furthermore, in these early stages, redaction strategies meant a breaking down of the text into units which are then separately analysed.¹²⁶ A

¹²⁵ Peter R. Ackroyd is to be credited as the main contributor for putting forward four chief phases in the transmission process, i.e. (1) oral deliveries or the original prophecies of the prophet, (2) the oral transmission of these prophecies, (3) an early written collection of the prophecies which may have occurred during or shortly after the ministry of Haggai, and (4) a final editor who expanded and reinterpreted the writings 1 - 2 centuries later. For Ackroyd, the final editor's purpose was to repudiate Samaritan claims during the Second temple period. – Peter Ackroyd, "Studies in the Book of Haggai" *Journal of Jewish Studies* 2 (1951): 163-76; "Studies in the Book of Haggai" *Journal of Jewish Studies* 3 (1952): 151-56.

¹²⁶ W. A. Beuken deals specifically with the final redactors who with additions converted the prophetic oracles to "scene sketches." The first redactor is perceived as a Judean conservative who remained in Palestine during the exile, and whose purpose was to deny and condemn any form of Jewish syncretism. Beuken also introduces the final redactor as the Chronistic editor to which the final form is presented as chronicles. Beuken also shares the anti-Samaritan perspective. – W. A. M Beuken, *Haggai-Sacharja 1-8* Assen (1967).

key modification was realized in the works of Childs.¹²⁷ Further, Meyers and Meyers,¹²⁸ do not refute the standing layers but argue for an analysis of the text as a coherent whole to be more fruitful today; thus, the emphasis of this work on the canonical shape, final form and the final redactor of the text. Building upon this unified approach have been the many scholars who employed specific focuses, methods and agendas.¹²⁹ Whilst historical-critical¹³⁰ methods remain an essential element of biblical studies, attention

¹²⁷ While Brevard Childs acknowledges the redaction debate and its problems, a certain shift is evident to a more unified perception of the book, i.e. focussing more on its canonical shape. In his analysis, Childs offers theological and hermeneutical implications, (1) concludes that there is a slight balance between political action and the eschaton. Haggai is perceived as a political activist committed to the political programme of the restoration of the temple. At the same time this political message is situated within a larger theological context. (2) The dangers of focussing too much on historical reconstruction tend to overwhelm the theological thrust of the canonical shape. An example is the focus on the Samaritan tension and its theological implications despite its absence in the text. (3) The prophetic word should be the criterion to which history should be judged and not the other way around which is the common practice in historical critical scholarship. - Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979): 470 – 471.

¹²⁸ Carol and Eric Meyers insist that while the editorial framework may have been imposed on the core material, they follow the shift noted in Child's discussion. They see little gain in treating the layers separately as individual units; rather they argue for a continuity between the oracular and narrative portions. - Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 1987), lxx.

¹²⁹ Seth Sykes. "Time and Space in Haggai-Zechariah 1-8: A Bakhtinian Analysis of a Prophetic Chronicle." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. 76 (1997): 97 - 124. Here, Sykes utilizes Bakhtin's intertextual theory to analyse the prophetic chronicle which defines the relationships between Haggai and Zechariah as well as prophetic material and that of the Ancient Near East; Ray L. Huntington, "Consider Your Ways: The Book of Haggai and the Responsibilities and Blessings of Temple Work" in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson. Provo and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book (2005): 236-244. John Blanchard, *Major Points from the Minor Prophets: The Minor Prophets made Accessible and Applicable* (County Durham: Evangelical Press, 2012). Both Huntington and Blanchard fall back to historical analysis for theological and homiletic purposes. See also Rimón Kasher, "Haggai and Ezekiel: The Complicated Relations between the Two Prophets." *Vetus Testamentum*. 59 (2009): 556 – 582.; Robert C. Kasher, "Zechariah 1 – 8 as a Theological Explanation for the Failure of Prophecy in Haggai 2:20-23." *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, Vol. 64. Pt 2 (Oct 2013): 385 – 403.; Max Rogland, "Two Philological Notes on Haggai 2:15 – 19." *Hebrew Studies*. 54 (2013): 69 – 77.;

¹³⁰ The following are other works that utilize the traditional historical-critical analysis. Werner H. Schmidt, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1984): 271 – 273. See also Peter C. Craigie, *The Twelve Prophets: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*. Vol. 2 (Philadelphia / Edinburgh: Westminster / Saint Andrew Press, 1985). John W. Miller, *Meet the Prophets: A Beginner's Guide to the Books of the Biblical Prophets* (New York / Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987).; J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament: From its Origins to the Closing of the Alexandria Canon*. Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1976.)

has shifted and resulted in the revival of the vitality of literary critical analysis in conjunction with the emerging importance of social sciences.¹³¹

In this brief history of the Haggai debate, the major movement is the adjustment from the studying of separate units to examining the text as a cohesive whole. We must note that despite the emphasis on the text as a coherent collective, the individuality of the units remain a vital element as they are parts associated and make up the whole. We shall now move into the superstructure section of this horizon in which the discussion will be focussed on the form of the text. Our discussions shall also take into consideration the movement between the collective and the individual units of the text.

2. Superstructure

Textual analysis will therefore focus on the form in order to detect traces of the ideological or imaginary resolution that has taken place. Given the ideological and formal nature of the resolution, a formal analysis will also hope to uncover certain ideological features of the text.¹³²

According to Boer, the task is to locate traces of the attempted resolutions through the analysis of the form of the document. Given the strong association of the

¹³¹ Noelle McAfee, *Democracy and the Political Unconscious* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008). Philip Goldstein, "Humanism and Politics of Truth" *Boundary 2*. Vol. 12/13, Vol. 12, no. 3 – Vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring – Autumn 1984): 235 – 257. Jonathan Goldberg, "The Politics of Renaissance Literature: A Review Essay." *English Literary History*. Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 1982): 514 – 542. Stefan Hawling, "Love Among the Political Ruins: 1848 and the Political Unconscious of Men and Women." *Victorian Poetry*. Vol. 50. No. 4 (Winter 2012): 503 – 520. Mary Thomas Crane, "Surface, Depth, and Spatial Imaginary: A Cognitive Reading of the Political Unconscious." *Representations* Vol.108, No. 1 (Fall 2009): 76 – 97. Adebayo Williams, "Ritual and the Political Unconscious: The Case of Death and the King's Horseman." *Research in African Literature*, Nebojsa Blanus, "Political Unconscious of Croatia and the EU: Tracing the Yugoslav Syndrome through Fredric Jameson's Lenses." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*. Vol. 16, No. 2 (2014): 196 – 222. Jaecheol Kim, "Cognitive Cartography in the Neocolonial World: Jameson's 'Third-World Literature' and Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*. Vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer 2013): 184 – 206. Tanner Mirrlees, "Cognitive Mapping or, the Resistant Element in the Work of Fredric Jameson: A Response to Jason Berger." *An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory & Practice*. Vol. 8, (2005), p11-11. 1p.

¹³² Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44.

task at hand and the ideologies, the assignment will thus include identifying and analysing ideological features such as signs of control in the story, the conscious layout of the material and its function, but also signs or patterns of attempted closure.¹³³

The literary surface of Haggai has been difficult to characterize and critical opinions remain divided. The debate as to whether the book is ‘prose’ or ‘poetry’ originated from comparative studies carried out on the Hebrew texts of Haggai. O. Procksch’s (1937) assessment in *BHK* – Kittel’s edition of the Masoretic text – has the book of Haggai printed as prose. K. Elliger (1970), in his editorial work for *BHS* – Stuttgart edition – decided to present most of Haggai’s speeches as poetry.¹³⁴ Advocates of the poetic stance – although few – believe that the deliverance of oracles in poetic form was something that came naturally to the Hebrew prophets.¹³⁵ On the other hand, although the prose argument is well supported, a strong presence of poetic form is still acknowledged, especially in the words of the prophet.¹³⁶ It is already plain that two formal features have dominated discussions over the years and continue to do so. I now move to discuss further these forms in the book of Haggai with special focus on their proposed functions in the book, but more importantly, to discern their relationship with each other.

¹³³ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 122.

¹³⁴ Duane L. Christensen, “Impulse and Design in the Book of Haggai” in *JETS* 35/4 (December 1992) 445. David L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary*, TOTL, eds. Peter Ackroyd, James Barr, Bernhard W. Anderson, James L. Mayes (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 32.

¹³⁵ Rex Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* (London/New York/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 6.

¹³⁶ Peter C. Craigie, *The Twelve Prophets: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*. Vol.2. TDSB (Philadelphia/Edinburgh: The Westminster Press/The Saint Andrew Press, 1985), 135-136.

2.1. Poetry

The great majority of prophetic speech is in the form of poetry. Overall, prophetic poetry is similar to poetry incorporated in other genres of the Hebrew Bible. However, the major characteristic of prophetic poetry is the divine vocative addressed to a historical audience which is presented either as the voice of *Yahweh* or *Yahweh's* voice through the chosen prophet. Freedman argues that prophets were the inheritors of poetic traditions of Israel's faith and it was their duty to maintain, sustain, enhance, renew and recreate the tradition in the face of an opposition who preferred their religion in a more manageable prose forms.¹³⁷ Freedman does not exactly state who the opposition may be but hopefully as we progress in our work, a possible opponent(s) may appear for the purpose of analysis.¹³⁸

The following sections have been identified and interpreted by the Stuttgart edition as poetry: 1:3-11; 1:15b; 2:3-9; 2:14-19; 2:20-23. In light of this distinction, we shall carry out our own poetic assessment of the text by identifying and confirming certain poetic characteristics and their function within the book of Haggai.

Paronomasia

Play on words or verbal puns are characteristics of poetry and the following are examples from the book of Haggai. In 1:4 & 9, the verb *הָרַב* "ruin" and in 1:11 *חָרַב* "drought." The first two occurrences are used to describe the condition of *Yahweh's* house while the latter is used in connection with the people's land and its unfavourable

¹³⁷David Noel Freedman suggests that in classical Hebrew prose texts, these particles are used approximately eight times as often as they are in classical Hebrew poetry. _____ "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry" in *JBL* 96/1 (1997), 21.

¹³⁸ Freedman, "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry", 22-23.

condition. Thus, the play on the consonants **חֶרֶב** can be perceived as a lexical thread that implies a reciprocal connection between the condition of the temple and the condition of the land.¹³⁹

The second set of puns we find is 1:6 **וַיָּבִיאוּ** “and bring in” and 1:8 & 9 **וַיָּבִיאוּתָם** “and bring.” In the first instance, the verb is used in relation to the unsatisfying results of their labours, i.e. they sow much but harvest – i.e. “bring in” – very little. The second usage of the root is part of the command to the people to “bring” wood to build *Yahweh’s* house. The final occurrence reflects the first in the sense that the fruit of their labours that they “bring” home is unsatisfying. The root **בֹּא** “to come” becomes a lexical link between the self-centredness of the people – which in effect is also the spiritual cause of the people’s problems – and the preparation for building which in effect is the turning point for the people and their situation.¹⁴⁰

Repetition

The most common poetic feature in the book of Haggai is repetition, which can be in the form of a word, phrase or a full sentence. As a rhetorical device, repetitions aim to make an idea or point clearer, furthermore, they place emphasis on that idea to signify its importance in both oral and written text. The following are examples of repetitive phrases:

¹³⁹ Richard A. Taylor, E. Ray. Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NIV, NAC Vol.21A. (Nashville/Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 68.

¹⁴⁰ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 68.

First, the phrase *הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּיָד* “the word of the Lord came in the hand...” (1:1, 3; 2:1, 10, 20)¹⁴¹ is part of the prophetic word formula that usually signified in particular the coming of *Yahweh’s* word and engaging in a private communication with the receiver. Notably, apart from the final occurrence in Hag 2:20, this poetic element frequently shows up in the prosaic sections.

Second, the messenger formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* “thus says the Lord” (1:2, 5, 7; 2:6, 11) and a varied form in “says the Lord” (Hag 1:8, 9, 13; 2:4 [2x], 7, 8, 9[2x], 14, 17, 23 [3x]) is evident throughout the text.¹⁴² The messenger formula is common in prophetic material: not only does the speaker identify the one on whose behalf he/she speaks but it brings authority and credibility to the message. Like the previous phrase, the existence of poetic elements amongst the prosaic sections is also evident.

Third, the use of the phrase *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת* “*Lord of Hosts*” (1:2, 5, 7, 9; 2:4, 6, 7, 8, 9(2x), 11, 23(2x)) appears to be the speaker’s favourite designation of *Yahweh*. The word *צְבָאוֹת* “hosts” is a common occurrence in postexilic prophets and, despite debates regarding its use as *Yahweh’s* war name, it is considered here as a re-establishing of the pre-exilic conception of the divine presence, thus expressing the ultimate authority of *Yahweh*. According to Meyers and Meyers, the occurrences in Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi account for more than one third of all occurrences in the Bible.¹⁴³ Rhetorically, this designation may have been utilized as a sort of coded language to which only certain

¹⁴¹ All translation from Hebrew to English in this project are my own personal interpretations.

¹⁴² Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature*, FOTL Vol.9, eds. Rolf Knierim and Gene Tucker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 265.

¹⁴³ Paul L. Redditt, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 18. See also Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 18-19.

people relate to and understand. Expressing *Yahweh's* authority – especially if it occurred in secretive manners – can definitely signify a possible resistance to the political authority of the time; i.e. the Persian king. Such strategies would definitely be effective not only in oral communication but also written – once again we note that these poetic features occur in the prose sections.

The phrase *עֲיִמוּ לְבַבְכֶּם עַל־דַּרְכֵיכֶם* “*consider your ways*” occurs 2 times (Hag 1:5, 7) with an edited version “*consider*” occurring 3 times (Hag 2:15, 18(2x)). The full phrase is rare in the Bible and the closest to it outside of Haggai is in the words of Moses who urges the people to consider the words of the law (Deut 32:45). These words were meant for the Israelites – when they came into the land of Canaan – to reflect and respond accordingly to the law. Here Haggai urges the people to reflect on their ways, or rather, what they have been doing, and to respond accordingly. There is no doubt that the text – in either oral or written form – emphasizes the need for the people to seriously reflect on their situation and to respond. As far as the intertextual relationship with earlier traditions is concerned, it would be more likely that it is an affiliation intended by the redactor(s) for the targeted audience and readers, although we cannot totally rule out the idea that Haggai may have alluded to past traditions which may have been well known within the community. Regardless, it is quite possible that the connection with the Mosaic traditions is an appeal that the people should not only remember and reflect on their past but also hopefully to perceive their situation in light of the Deuteronomic pattern of blessing and cursing.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ The “Deuteronomic Principle” in its simplest explanation is; obedience to *Yahweh's* commands brings blessing. Disobedience brings a curse and destruction.

The phrase אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם *"I am with you"* occurs only twice (1:13 and 2:4) but proves to be very crucial to the text and interpretation. First, the phrase plays the role of assurance of support in "priestly salvation oracles."¹⁴⁵ The central role this phrase plays in the interpretation of the book of Haggai will become clearer as we move along in our analysis; its mention at this point is strictly in support of poetic features.

Parallelism – Chiasmus/Chiasms

The most obvious characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, which is the expression of one idea in two or more ways. The parallelism of Hebrew poetry was first extensively investigated by Lowth in 1753 in which he proposed three types of parallelism, i.e. synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic.¹⁴⁶ For the text of Haggai, we shall assess parallelism in our structural discussion later on.

Intertextuality

One of the greatest resources any speaker may have at his or her disposal is a solid familiarity with earlier traditions, oral or written. In the case of the Hebrew prophets, their poetic and rhetorical instincts would have easily deployed their sacred writings and early traditions in order to support and accentuate their message. However, it must be noted that poetic analysis itself is already a major part of the Jamesonian method. In certain cases, it is usually the assumption that the readers of the book of Haggai are familiar with the alluded-to traditions and their original contexts.

¹⁴⁵ Wollf, *Haggai*, 50. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 149-149.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Lowth, *Lectures of the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, Translated by G. Gregory (Boston: Joseph Buckingham Publications, 1815), 253. Tim Chaffey, "Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry Demonstrates a Major Error in the Hermeneutic of many Old-Earth Creationists" in *ARJ* 5 (2012): 115-123.

Thus context will be important to grasping Haggai's use of the earlier material. Below we assess a few instances where Haggai the poet makes reference to or connection with the past.

Haggai & Deuteronomistic History (DH)

There are a few examples in the book of Haggai that may indicate its use of language reminiscent of that found in the books of the Deuteronomistic History, henceforth DH.¹⁴⁷ We commence with connections to the book of Deuteronomy. First, in terms of the language used to describe the people's unrewarding results for their toil, in Hag 1:6 we note the phrase *וְרַעְתֶּם הָרֶבֶה וְהִבֵּא מְעֻט* "*You have sown much, and harvested little*" (Deut 28:38). In addition to the poor harvest, we may also find the following ideas: insufficient food to eat is shown by the yearning to reach the land of Canaan where food will be in abundance (Deut 6:11; 8:10; 11:15); the same applies to inadequate clothes (Deut 10:18).¹⁴⁸ In Hag 1:11, futility has fallen *וְעַל כָּל-יִגְיֵעַ כְּפָיִם* "*upon all the work of their hands*" (Deut 28:20) as a result of drought (Deut 28:23)¹⁴⁹ that affected the land, flocks and humans (Deut 28:18). The language of the Dtr – and Hag 1:6 in particular – is suggestive of that of "futility curses."¹⁵⁰ According to Petersen these take form in a

¹⁴⁷ Deuteronomistic History – referring to Martin Noth's theory of the books of Deuteronomy – 2 Kings being a unified history written by a single author/compiler known as the Deuteronomist (Dtr).

¹⁴⁸ Jones, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 40.

¹⁴⁹ Other natural hazards to the agrarian society are mentioned in Hag 2:17, i.e. blight, mildew and hail will be discussed separately.

¹⁵⁰ Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, Biblica et orientalia. Vol 16 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 28-29. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 154. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 50. Ramos connects the futility curses of Deuteronomy with Aramaic curses of the Iron Age. Furthermore, both syntactically resemble the Northwest Semitic Curse Formula. Melissa Ramos, "A Northwest Semitic Curse Formula: The Sefire Treaty and Deuteronomy 28," in *ZAW* 128.2 (2016), 202-220.

protasis-apodosis¹⁵¹ form or rather the expression of the conditional as well as its consequence. Take note of Hag 1:9 which also shows this form;

You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses.

Kessler argues that futility curses also served to describe the pointlessness of human efforts when they sought to achieve their own goals in opposition to *Yahweh*; thus, the consequences are usually a response to violation of covenant terms.¹⁵² So clearly this strongly re-emphasizes the central theme of the book of Haggai, i.e. the suffering under poor economic conditions is a consequence of failure to work on *Yahweh's* house.

Second, we have a connection between Haggai and the book of the prophet Amos.

Haggai 2:17

הִפִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּשֹׁדָפוֹן וּבִיִּרְקוֹן וּבִכְבֹּד אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂי־יְדֵיכֶם וְאִין־אַתֶּם אֵלַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה

I struck you [and] all the work of your hands with blight and with mildew and with hail; [and] yet you did not [return] towards me says the Lord.

Amos 4:9

וְכִרְמֵיכֶם וְתֵאֲנִיכֶם וְזִיתֵיכֶם יֹאכֵל הַגָּזֵם הַרְבֵּוֹת גִּזְוֹתֵיכֶם הִפִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּשֹׁדָפוֹן וּבִיִּרְקוֹן

וְלֹא־שָׁבַתֶם עָדִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה

I have struck you with blight and with mildew; the locusts devoured your gardens and *your* vineyards and *your* fig trees and *your* olive trees when they [were caused to] increased, [and] yet you did not return to me says the Lord.

¹⁵¹ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 50.

¹⁵² John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy & Society in Early Persian Yehud* (Leiden/Boston/Koln: Brill, 2002), 154.

Note that the first four words of Haggai 2.17 match that of Amos 4.9 which suggests a connection, specifically in the way *בַּשָּׂדֶה כֶּזֶן* “*blight*” and *וּבִרְקֹן* “*and mildew*” are listed among the judgments that *Yahweh* will use as punishment on the people of Israel should they choose to disobey their covenantal responsibilities. This language, however, is also suggestive of that of the Dtr (c.f. Deut.28:22).

Third, Haggai 2:4-5 shows strong affiliation not only with the language but also the style of the book of Joshua. The imperative *חֲזַק* “*be strong*” is repeated three times¹⁵³ as the prophet moves to assure *Yahweh’s* presence amongst the people. First, this command was one which was repeated many times not only to Joshua (Deut 31:7; Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18);¹⁵⁴ but also to the people of Israel (Deut 31:6; Josh 10:25) giving them strength and assurance as they prepare to enter the promised land.¹⁵⁵ Second, the assurance of *Yahweh’s* presence echoes that of Josh 1:5;

No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life.
As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you
nor forsake you.

This example of *Yahweh’s* faithfulness to the people of Israel in the day of Moses and Joshua would have been traditional stories from which people continuously drew strength. The general consensus is that the Joshua events are being alluded to here – Hag 2:5 even alludes to the exodus event – and is adapted to confront the returnees with the challenge before them, i.e. to continue building *Yahweh’s* house. To further solidify these allusions to the Exodus event, the language in Hag 2:22 brings to mind a defining event in the history of the people of Israel found in Exod 15:1. These words appeal to the

¹⁵³ In Josh 1:6-9, the imperatives *חֲזַק* (*hazaq*) “*be strong*” and *יָמֵץ* (*emas*) “*be courageous*” are repeated three times.

¹⁵⁴ cf. also Josh 1:5 which

¹⁵⁵ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 47.

singing and celebration of Moses, Miriam and the people of Israel as *Yahweh* victoriously defeats Pharaoh and the pursuit at the Red Sea crossing. Note here however that Haggai has his own agenda, i.e. while Moses and Israel celebrate an event which lies in the past, Haggai's concern is future oriented, focusing on what *Yahweh* will do for the Yehud community.¹⁵⁶

The rhetoric behind this would be to draw the people's focus back to their status as the people of the covenant. This in turn will lead them to reconsider their duties and responsibilities and need for obedience especially in their relationship with *Yahweh*.¹⁵⁷ For Taylor and Clendenen, while this alluding to Deuteronomy serves positively as verification of an existing covenantal relationship with *Yahweh*, on the more negative front, it also validates the current status of the people as being cursed for failing to uphold their end of the treaty.¹⁵⁸

Haggai & the Prophets

While we have already identified connections between Haggai and Amos, correlation can also be seen with Joel and Jeremiah. First, Haggai 2:6, 7, 21 and Joel 4:16 appear to share similar eschatological ideas when both make reference to the shaking of the heavens. The vocabulary here is common and there is the possibility that Haggai may not be alluding specifically to the language of Joel; however, we should still leave room for even the slightest coincidence.¹⁵⁹ At this stage our purpose is to identify poetic

¹⁵⁶ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 87.

¹⁵⁷ *Yahweh's* covenant with the people of Israel models the *ANE* suzerain-vassal treaties. In this treaty, the dominant side, the suzerain king offers certain conditions to the loyal smaller side, the vassal. A vassal would agree to the terms of the suzerain in return for the suzerain's protection from enemies. Peter C. Craigie provides a brief explanation of these treaties and Israel's adaptation on p.23. — Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 22-24. See also J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 17-21.

¹⁵⁸ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 68.

¹⁵⁹ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 68.

features, yet, we shall make use of this slight opening to our advantage in our ideological discussions later.

In Hag 2:23 we come across the metaphor חֶטֶם “*signet ring*” which is also found in Jer 22:24. In the latter, the signet ring – which signifies ownership and authority – is removed by *Yahweh* as a sign of the rejection of Jehoiachin the king. The former also adapts the metaphoric effect of the concept in reference to Zerubbabel – who is the grandson of the rejected king. By contrast, Haggai describes divine pleasure in the future leader. In effect it appears that Haggai reverses the curse that is expressed in Jeremiah.¹⁶⁰

We note also the syntactical resemblance between Hag 1:12 and Jer 43:5, in particular the use of שָׁמַע “*hear/obey*” and בְּקוֹל “*in the voice*” which in Jeremiah signifies faithfulness to the Sinai covenant and may recall the Exodus experience in addition.¹⁶¹ This further supports the emphasis on the ideals of Deuteronomy, especially with regards to the response such a text hopes to provoke from the people.

On a more thematic¹⁶² level, the association of *Yahweh’s* כְּבוֹד “*glory/honor*”¹⁶³ with the centrality of the temple and cult show the influence of the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 8-11).¹⁶⁴ Here Ezekiel describes the departure of *Yahweh’s* glory from the Solomonic

¹⁶⁰ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 87-89.

¹⁶¹ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 144.

¹⁶² There are also glimpses of other biblical themes which may become useful in later discussion; e.g. Zion traditions, hope as in the Psalms, etc., however the immediate focus will remain within the confines of prophetic traditions.

¹⁶³ The concept of “*glory/honor*” כְּבוֹד will be central to the discussions at the interpretation phase of this horizon.

¹⁶⁴ S S Tuell, “Haggai-Zechariah: Prophecy after the Manner of Ezekiel,” in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 325 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 273-91.

temple which serves as a prelude to its destruction together with the city of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. For Haggai, *Yahweh's* glory cannot return unless the temple has been rebuilt.

The prophet Haggai finds it important to appeal to not only the DH but also to prophetic traditions. Given the very strong connection both traditions have with the concept of *Yahweh's* covenant with the people of Israel, Haggai clearly sees the Yehud community as the continuation of this covenantal people who are to abide by the deuteronomic principle and law – especially concerning blessing and curses. The appeal to prophetic traditions places even more emphasis on this special relationship with *Yahweh*.

Summary

In this section we have identified and discussed a few instances which function to consolidate the strong presence of poetry in the book of Haggai, as was already indicated by the editorial decisions of the Stuttgart edition. Apart from the obvious poetic features, there were also signs of poetic elements in the prosaic sections. As our concern in this particular phase is with the relationship between forms, it appears that the poetic features are persistent in their stand against the dominant prose elements which will now be the focus of our discussion.

2.2. Prose

Let us be reminded that this talk of form and prose respectively is already part of the discussion of the Jamesonian method. We shall consider first the few verses allocated as prose (Hag 1:1-2, 12-15a; 2:1-2, 10-13). Literally, 11.5 of 38 verses roughly makes 30 percent of the book, but let us not be misled by this figure as the following

discussion will show that more widely used prose characteristics and elements¹⁶⁵ loudly demand attention for themselves. First of all I shall consider the existing prose characteristics and their relation to the poetic features. The second part will deal with prose elements and their contribution to the formal relationship in Haggai.

Haggai 1:1-2

Verse 1

בְּשָׁנָה שְׁתִּימִים לְקִרְיָנוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁשִׁי בְּיוֹם אֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּיַד־חֲגִי הַנָּבִיא
אֶל־זֶרְבָבֶל בֶּן־שְׁאֵלְתִּיאֵל פֶּתַח יְהוּדָה וְאֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל לֵאמֹר

In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

The first talking point of this verse is the precision in the dating. It is worth noting that the inclusion of the month and day in dating is a development of the mid sixth century B.C.E. The normal practice prior to the seventh century B.C.E. was the sole use of the year (1 Kgs 15:9; 16:10, etc; Isa 14:28; Amos 1:1) whereas the more precise dating would vary with the incorporation of the month and day. At times the full date would be given with year, month and day (2 Kgs 25:1, 8, 27; Jer 39:2; 52:4, 12; Ezek 1:1; 20:1, etc). On other occasions only the year and month were reported (Jer 28:1, 17; 36:9; 39:1), and finally other dating would include only the month and day (2 Kgs 25:3; Jer 52: 6).¹⁶⁶ In addition, the precise dating became a typical feature in the works of the scribes from

¹⁶⁵ In prose conversations we find that 'characteristic' is usually used synonymously with 'elements.' In this work I wish to use them distinctively. 'Prose characteristic' focuses strictly on the literary situation, i.e. language, grammar, syntax, etc. 'Prose elements' shall focus more on the narrative-related questions such as characters, plot, setting, themes, etc...

¹⁶⁶ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 42-44.

the late exilic period onwards. The postexilic prophets also showed the popularity of this feature including Haggai – “...*second year... sixth month... first day*.”¹⁶⁷ Petersen states that dating is an element of prose¹⁶⁸ which may fall in line with Ackroyd’s claim that dating was evidence of later insertions.¹⁶⁹ This work also upholds the popular prosaic nature of the dating; but considering their function in the narrative, it would be useful to analyse all four dates within the presupposed prosaic sections (Hag 1:1, 15; 2:1, 2:10).

The specific arrangement of year, month and day is of interest. With the exception of the omitted year in 1:15, we find an alternating pattern; i.e. (Hag 1:1) year, month, day; (1:15) day, month; (2:1) year, month, day; and (2:10) day, month, year. Once again from a prosaic perspective, the case could be made for these dates functioning as an envelope to bring a sense of totality to the entire text. Kessler notes how the sequence of the dates reflect a transformation in the political and social situation of the people of Yehud, i.e. while the year, month, day order represented an older Judean date formula, the reversed day, month, year represented a typical Persian arrangement.¹⁷⁰ This reflects a period of transition where an earlier form of dating is being displaced. Rhetorically, while the system of referring to dates resembles that of pre-exilic prophets, the displacement of the kings of Judah and Israel by the Persian monarch also highlights the shift from an older order to the new.

Our next point is the syntactical use of the words בְּיָד “*in the hand of.../through*” and לְ “*to*” to make clear distinction between the mediator and the recipient of *Yahweh’s*

¹⁶⁷ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 42-44, 115.

¹⁶⁸ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 42.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Ackroyd, “Two Old Testament Historical Problems of the Early Persian Period,” in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. 17 no 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press Books, 1958): 22. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 44.

¹⁷⁰ See Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 45-48 for a detail discussion of the order in dating.

word. First, the phrase *בְּיָד* “in the hand of.../through” is a common Hebrew idiom normally used to describe the prophetic mediation of Moses in the Pentateuch (Lev 8:36, 10:11; Num. 4:37-45; Jos. 14:2; etc.).¹⁷¹ Only occasionally is it used to refer to mediation of prophets in general (2 Kgs 12:13; Ezek 38:17; Zech 7:7, 12; 2 Sam 2:25; 1 Kgs 12:15; Isa 20:2; Jer 37:2, 50:1; Mal 1:1). Given other intertextual connections made earlier with the book of Deuteronomy, it is quite possible that the author(s) intended message(s) were closely associated with the deuteronomistic pattern of blessing and cursing¹⁷² which is clearly portrayed in the narrative, but that at this time it is the temple that acts as the main criterion. Second, going back to the word combination, Redditt sees the lack of concern for genealogy and other elements typical of the prophetic superscriptions¹⁷³ as a sign of the writer’s – referred to as the chronicler – sole purpose to highlight Haggai’s role as mediator of the word.¹⁷⁴ Again we have no problem with making the prosaic connection, in fact, based on further biblical occurrences (1 Kgs 16:7, 12; Jer 50:1), Wolff observes that the combination is “chroniclelike.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. D. J. Wiseman (London: The Tyndale Press, 1972), 38.

¹⁷² The “Deuteronomistic Principle” in its simplest explanation is; obedience to Yahweh’s commands brings blessing. Disobedience brings a curse and destruction.

¹⁷³ Sweeney appropriately refers to the “superscriptions” as “narrative introductions” which is their main function. Usually the reader is introduced to the prophet who is the main subject of the book; normally the name is given and sometimes further information about the prophet – i.e. from a historical, social, political, theological, literary context – to assist the reader comprehend the prophet’s words and actions. Furthermore, the recipients of the messages may or may not be part of these prologues. Another important note with regards to the messages – whether it is made clear in the superscription or not – is that they are normally from Yahweh. Finally, superscriptions are always in the third person – with the exception of Ezekiel – which effectively presents the work as if it is written at a later time than the prophet concerning whom it reports. - Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature*, IBT (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 33.

¹⁷⁴ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 17. See also Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* 1-8, lxiii – lxvii.

¹⁷⁵ Hans Walter Wolff. *Haggai: A Commentary*. Translated by Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 31.

At this point we must note the occurrence of בַּיָּד “in the hand of.../through” in Hag 1:3, which according to our breakdown is part of the poetic element of the text. For Wolff, this combined with the הָלָא דְּבִרְיָהוָה “the coming of the word of Yahweh...” resembles the formula of the opening verse.¹⁷⁶ Both verses portray the “prophetic word formula” which functioned to introduce a private communication from *Yahweh* to the prophet. While the formula is later applied to introduce collections of prophetic oracles (Jer 2:1; 14:1; 24:4; 25:1; 30:1), it is influenced by the earlier narrative introduction of prophetic words (2 Sam 7:4; 1 Kgs 16:1; 17:2; 18:1, and so on).¹⁷⁷ While the repetition of this formula (Hag 1:1, 3, 2:1, 10) may highlight prosaic influence, it can just as well represent poetic resistance. The repetition indicates that Hag 1:1 is not a heading for the entire book but rather for the first oracle alone. This would mean that despite a very visible and dominant prosaic framework, it does not rid the text of poetic elements; i.e. the oracles – be they tainted by prosaic language and ideas – are still distinct through this introductory formula.¹⁷⁸ In this case we see tension between prose and poetry in the opening verse itself.

We now move to the epithets used in the text. From a narrative perspective, Redditt argues that the mention of the two leaders with their epithets is necessary as it represented for the redactor the three establishments which he contemplated belonged to the restoration, i.e. prophecy, monarchy and priesthood.¹⁷⁹ While this may have a narrative feel to it, we may also take note of how Haggai’s use of epithets for Darius,

¹⁷⁶ Wolff, *Haggai*, 32.

¹⁷⁷ Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature*, FOTL Vol.9, eds. Rolf Knierim and Gene Tucker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 265.

¹⁷⁸ For Meyers and Meyers, Haggai demonstrates patterns in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah where this phrase begins oracular units - *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 7-8. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 17. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 44-45.

¹⁷⁹ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 18-19.

Zerubbabel and Joshua forms a structural parallelism,¹⁸⁰ which is a poetic rhetorical feature.

Finally the name Haggai, חַגַּי – meaning “*festal*,” is believed to derive from חַג “*feast, holiday*.”¹⁸¹ In historical terms, Meyers and Meyers argue that the name had no symbolic connection with the festivals and celebrations associated with the temple of the time.¹⁸² While this position is understandable at one level, it is also possible to analyse the text from a rhetorical perspective, in terms of the presumed emphasis of the author(s) or final editor of the book. Thus, the affiliation between the prophet’s name – which according to Meyers and Meyers became a common name only in the post-exilic era – and the Jewish annual festivals may have been intended by the author, especially in light of his mission to urge the rebuilding of the temple.¹⁸³ Therefore, although wordplay can be element common in both poetry and prose, the rhetoric appears more effective – in this case – as part of the narrative.

Verse 2

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר הָעַם הַזֶּה אָמְרוּ לֹא עָתִידָא עֲתִידָא עֲתִידָא יְהוָה לְהִבְנוֹת

Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house.

Quite obvious in the beginning is the messenger formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה “*thus says Yahweh*” which is a core feature of the Hebrew prophetic material. The main element in this formula is the identification by the speaker of the one who ordered the transmitting

¹⁸⁰Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 118.

¹⁸¹ Although other sources for Haggai’s name have been suggested, - חַגַּי “reeling” and חַגִּיה “feast of Yah” – they still relate back to the root חַג “*feast, holiday*.” See BDB, 290-291. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 8.

¹⁸² Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 8-9.

¹⁸³ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 17. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 44-45.

of the message.¹⁸⁴ The formula projects a very close relationship between the oracles of Haggai and the word of *Yahweh*. Given the prophet's status as mediator, the formula authenticates his message. In other words when the prophet speaks, *Yahweh* is also speaking. This was one way to authenticate a message in the days of oral delivery, however, it continued to be as effective in written form.¹⁸⁵ Although this section is presumably prose, we see yet again, the ongoing struggle between prose and poetry.

The latter part of the sentence expresses the people's perception of time and rebuilding the temple. We take note especially of the repetition of the word זמן "*time*" which has been at the root of textual debates;¹⁸⁶ i.e. "*the time has not come...*" as opposed to "*it is not time to come.*" Clearly, time is the subject of the verb in the former which appears not to be the case in the latter. Here the subject is not mentioned, leaving room for speculation. The main assumption is that the people – who are also mentioned in Hag 2:14 – are the subjects.¹⁸⁷ This information is relevant for argument in the latter part of this work but the immediate focus is on the rhetorical function of this repetition. Seen in conjunction with the occurrence in Hag 1:4, threefold repetition draws the attention of the audience – both listener and reader – to the special relationship of the concept of time and the temple.¹⁸⁸ I mention both listener and reader above as this repetitive strategy would be effective in both oral and written material. However, it must be noted that the poetic material contains the single use in Hag 1:4. It is however the redactional activities that have added the double use, which serves to emphasis time. Thus, we

¹⁸⁴ Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature*, FOTL Vol.9, eds. Rolf Knierim and Gene Tucker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 265.

¹⁸⁵ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 122. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 18.

¹⁸⁶ See Kessler on a detailed discussion of the textual debate, - *The Book of Haggai*, 103-104.

¹⁸⁷ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 103-104.

¹⁸⁸ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 103-104. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 20.

encounter an example of how prose utilizes poetic material and moulds it for its purposes.

Overall, these first two verses function as a narrative introduction to the first oracle (Hag 1:1-15a).

Haggai 1:12-15a

From a narrative perspective, this section provides a first sign of reverse situations and conditions. Note that the first poetic section (Hag 1:3-11) portrays the reluctance of the people to work on the temple, as well as the harsh economic conditions as a consequence of their resistance. In terms of tensions and struggles, first, it is apparent that the people are caught in between the demands of two sides, i.e. the needs of the family and the demands of the temple. Second, there also seems to be tension between two perceptions of the causes of economic distress: on the one hand, the people's economic suffering is a consequence of reluctance to work on the temple; on the other hand, the people's reluctance itself indicates that work on the temple will contribute to economic failure. It is in this section – which functions as a narrative epilogue – that the tensions of the foregoing oracle appear to be resolved.

Verse 12

וַיִּשְׁמַע זְרֻבָּבֶל בֶּן־שֵׁאֲתִיֶּאל וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹזָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְכָל
אֲלֹהֵיהֶם וְעַל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה הַנִּבִּיא כְּאֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה

Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of the prophet Haggai, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the LORD.

In this first part, we note that the people who are addressed and said to obey *Yahweh* are the very same group Haggai addresses in the beginning (Hag 1:1). However, there are some noticeable differences. First, Zerubbabel is without the epithet while Joshua retains his title. One opinion suggests that the omission was the redactor's way of downplaying the fact that Zerubbabel was a Persian official.¹⁸⁹ An alternative argument sees it as an indication of the dominant status of the high priest.¹⁹⁰ In light of our purposes, we are more concerned with the implications of these arguments, i.e. while there seems to be no issues reporting on Joshua and the office of the high priest, the redactor(s) feel that Zerubbabel's title – at this particular point – would be a disadvantage to their interests.

The book of Haggai employs שְׂאֲרִית *"rest, residue, remnant"* to represent the concept of the remnant (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2). While the concept shall be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, our immediate concern is its contribution to our analysis of the tension between poetry and prose. This designation of the people is the redactor'(s) favourite as it dominates the prose sections and may have very well been a more acceptable reference in the redactor's time. We however, will simply conclude that for the book of Haggai, the redactor(s) used the phrase as the preferred reference to people in general. Its inclusion alone would have stirred up tension as opposed to a text that uniformly retains the use of a single concept.

Also drawing our interests is the combination of שָׁמַע *"hear/obey"* and בְּקוֹל *"in the voice"* which brings to mind language of the Sinai covenant and Deuteronomic

¹⁸⁹ Wollf, *Haggai*, 51.

¹⁹⁰ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 50. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 140-142.

traditions.¹⁹¹ As discussed earlier, the agricultural language and presentation in the text closely resembles the “curse formula” in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, which in effect calls for the people to return to obedience. Upon saying that, although the concept of obedience occurs only here in Hag 1:12, we find in earlier intertextual discussions with the DH that the redactor(s) placed great emphasis on this theme. “Obedience and hearing the voice of *Yahweh*” is therefore another major theme that continues throughout the book. Rhetorically, the obedient nature and the success of the prophet Haggai in his task, is strictly contrasted with the failure of the people in the preceding oracle. Again this not only supports the resolving function of this prosaic section, but it also serves as part of a dominating framework.

Verse 13

וַיֹּאמֶר חֲגַי מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה בְּמַלְאָכוֹת יְהוָה לָעַם לֵאמֹר אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה

Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, saying, I am with you, says the LORD.

Two items are worth noting in this verse. First, there is the emphasis that is placed on the status of Haggai. Obviously this status will play a major role in the message being delivered as well as the recipients. There should be no doubt about the authenticity and credibility of Haggai's message as he is the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה “messenger of *Yahweh*.” Furthermore; בְּמַלְאָכוֹת יְהוָה “with the message of *Yahweh*” is a sign that Haggai was commissioned by *Yahweh* to deliver the message. We note two possible reasons the redactor(s) may have for this: first, this would account for the lack of a commission event that appears in other prophetic material (Jer 1; Isa 6; Amos 7).

¹⁹¹ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 143-145. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 22-23. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 55-56.

Second, this would rhetorically assist the effect the message had on the audience, especially comforting messages such as אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם *"I am with you."* These words play a major role in "priestly salvation oracles" in which they project an assurance of support. Alternative translations are *"I am beside you"* or *"I am at your side"* (Exod 33:21; Isa 30:8; 43:5) and functions in our text as a response to the fear of the people in the previous verse.¹⁹² As we shall see in the structural analysis, this assurance of support plays a very central role¹⁹³ in the interpretation of events in the text.

Verses 14 and 15

וַיַּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ זְרֻבָבֶל בֶּן־שִׁלְתִּיאֵל פֶּקֶת יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־רוּחַ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְאֶת־רוּחַ כָּל שְׂאֲרֵית הָעָם וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ מְלָאכָה בְּבֵית־יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

Whilst many areas of this verse have already been incorporated in earlier discussions, we focus specifically on the phrase וַיַּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ *"And Yahweh aroused the spirit"* Three things can be noted here: first, the spirit in this context is understood as the person's will power; second, it is the spirit that moves the human will to action (1 Chr 5:26; 21:16; 2 Chr 36:22ff; Ezra 1:5; Isa 41:2, 25; 45:13; Jer 51:11); third, the arousal of the spirit does not merely serve the individual but benefits the whole community.¹⁹⁴ In the same nature the redactor has appealed to such traditions in order to highlight that

¹⁹² Wolff, *Haggai*, 50. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 149-149.

¹⁹³ From a structural viewpoint, we find reason to agree with Redditt's claim that in this assurance of support is where the author sums up the essence of Haggai's message. – see Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 22.

¹⁹⁴ Wolff, *Haggai*, 52-53. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 23. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 58-59. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 35-36.

it is *Yahweh* who activates the spirit of action of the people, in this case the spirit that acts to work on the temple.

Finally, to complete this portrait of *Yahweh*'s harmonious relationship with the people, the people were aroused וַיָּבֵאוּ *"and they came"* and worked on the temple.¹⁹⁵ Here again we see the reversal of the situation in the beginning where the people claimed that it was not time (for them) to "come" and work on the temple; in effect it also supports the resolution this section hopes to achieve.

The final verse in this section is 15a – בְּיוֹם עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ שְׁתַּיִם לְדַרְיוֹשׁ *"on the twenty-fourth day of the month, ..."* – which despite being very brief still plays an important role in the redactor(s) efforts. In sum, this should be seen as an inclusion device, rounding off the first narrative in the book.¹⁹⁶

Haggai 2:1-2

בְּשִׁבְעִי בְּעֲשָׂרִים וָאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּיַד־חַגִּי הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר:
אֲמַר־נָא אֶל־זֶרְבָבֶל בֶּן־שִׁלְתִּיאֵל פֶּתַח יְהוּדָה וְאֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְאֶל־שָׂאֲרִית הָעָם
לֵאמֹר

In the second year of King Darius, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, and say,

The third section of the prose division requires no further discussion as the main points were covered in the discussion of Hag 1:1-2.

¹⁹⁵ Wolff, *Haggai*, 53. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 36.

¹⁹⁶ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 23.

Haggai 2:10-13

Verse 10

בַּעֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֹשֶׁעִי בַשָּׁנָה שְׁתַּיִם לְדַרְגִּינֹשׁ הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־חֲגִי הַנְּבִיא לֵאמֹר:

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai, saying:

First, the absence of the epithet does not appear to be a major issue for commentators as they rather set their focus on the change in preposition. We will attempt to analyse for rhetorical purposes, as the absence of the epithet here sparks a revisiting of all introductory formulas in relation to their use or non-use of the Persian ruler's name. Three of these formulae lie within the prosaic sections (Hag 1:1 2:1, 10) and the fourth occurs in the final oracle under poetic material (Hag 2:20). A certain progression is visible: i.e. from being "king Darius" in the first two introductory formulae (Hag 1:1, 2:1), to "Darius" in the third (Hag 2:10), to being totally omitted in the final (Hag 2:20). The omission would be understandable as it was not necessary in its oral form, while on the contrary the redactor's concern to provide some context for the oracles would make use of such information to great effect. Simply considering the pattern – and this has relevance for the next point – the missing epithet appears to put into effect a slow fading of the Persian monarch and the authority he represents within the text. The hope in re-establishing of the Davidic throne through Zerubbabel is contrasted with the omission of the Persian king at the end. Our next point will dwell on this further.

Second, while the main elements of the introductory formula have already been discussed – in relation to Hag 1:1-2 – another matter that draws our attention is the change to the preposition *אֶל* "to" from the *בְּיָד* "in the hand of.../through." The latter is

utilized in the first two occurrence of the formula (Hag 1:1-2; 2:1) while the former is preferred in the last two (Hag 2:10, 20). This signifies a slight change in the way *Yahweh's* word is conveyed to Haggai. Where at first the word was conveyed by Haggai to an external party, the word now comes straight to Haggai. Related to the change is also the change in audience, where at first Haggai spoke to the entire community; now the audience is more distinct, i.e. here, Haggai dialogues with the priests and later he speaks directly with Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20-23).¹⁹⁷ Interestingly is the portrayal that *Yahweh* is now communicating through Haggai to a distinct number of people given that the work on the temple has begun. In connection to the previous point, while the Persian king fades out in the narrative, the Yehud leaders are highlighted more strongly, especially the person of Zerubbabel.

Verse 11

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁאֵל־נָא אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים תּוֹרָה לְאֹמֶר

Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests for a ruling:

Following the messenger formula – already discussed in Hag 1:2 – the redactor reports in third person a dialogue between Haggai and the priests, in which Haggai is instructed to ask for their ruling with regards to the matters of holiness and purity that follow in the next verses. The word תּוֹרָה “*law / instruction*” in this context refers to the priestly decision or decree. As noted, the purpose of the priestly *torah* was to provide instruction for people (Deut 33:10; Micah 3:11; Jer 18:8; and Ezek 7:26) who sought to obtain instruction (Deut 17:9, 11; Mal 2:7; Zech 7:2-4).¹⁹⁸ In addition, specific

¹⁹⁷ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 71-72. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 203.

¹⁹⁸ Wollf, *Haggai*, 90-91. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 72-78. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 55.

responsibilities were given to the Aaronite priests (Lev 10:10-11) in overseeing particular matters pertaining to holiness and purity, cleanness and uncleanness. In contrast, the Levites oversee more difficult cases (Deut 17:8-13). Another point about the priestly *torah* is that the priests were subjected to indictment if they failed to fulfil their duty in providing law and instruction (Ezek 22:26; Zeph 3:4). Finally, as is evident in the following verses, the obtaining of priestly instruction takes the form of a dialogue in which the questions asked expected a simple yes or no response from the priests.¹⁹⁹

Verses 12-13

הָאֵלֹהִים אִשָּׁא-אִישׁ בְּשֶׁר-קֹדֶשׁ בְּכִנּוּף בְּגָדוֹ וְנָגַע בְּכִנּוּפוֹ אֶל-הַלֶּחֶם וְאֶל-הַנֶּזֶד וְאֶל-הַיַּיִן וְאֶל-הַשֶּׁמֶן
וְאֶל-כָּל-מֵאֲכָל הַיְקֻדָּשׁ נִיעָנּוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא

If one carries consecrated meat in the fold of one's garment, and with the fold touches bread, or stew, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does it become holy? The priests answered, "No."

וַיֹּאמֶר חֲגִי אִם-יִגַע טְמֵא-נֶפֶשׁ בְּכָל-אֵלֶּה הֲיִטְמָא וַיַּעֲנוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ יֵטְמָא:

Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered, "Yes, it becomes unclean."

The redactor(s) has Haggai present two cases for the priests' instruction. The first deals with the question of holiness and sees Haggai allude to the sacrificial laws and regulations of sin offering (Lev 6:26-27; 7:11-21). It is clear in these regulations that the consecrated meat makes holy anyone who comes into physical contact with it. The second case focuses on the issue of uncleanness and purity. The notion of becoming unclean through contact with a corpse requires one to go through a cleansing or purifying process as one is deemed to be unclean for a minimum of seven days (Num

¹⁹⁹ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 73- 75.

19:13).²⁰⁰ From a narrative perspective, this section provides a context for understanding the failing results of the work of the people's hands. Rhetorically, it promotes the necessity to rebuild the temple as it is portrayed as the purifying process, which not only cleanses the people but also the work of their hands.

2.1.1. Structure

We have by now seen the influence of prose in some detail throughout the text of Haggai. We now move to discuss the structure which will be important in relation to the question of form. In our analysis, we will make use of an ancient structural technique that employs parallelism, i.e. material that is organized by reversed parallelisms. The structural form is known as "chiasmus" or simply "chiasm."²⁰¹ While the first chiasm mentioned below may have been inspired by the work of Swinburnson on Haggai 1:1-15,²⁰² I have continued with three more chiastic analyses, each representing the final three messages and in effect form a series of rolling chiasms. Our intentions here are not only to pin down the individual central-points²⁰³ of each message, but more importantly to assess a possible overarching significance of the narrative they present as a collective.

Message One

- A 1. In the second year of King Darius
 2. ...in the sixth month

²⁰⁰ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 76-77.

²⁰¹ The term chiasmus originated from the Greek verb χιάζω which translate "to mark with two lines crossing like the Greek letter χ (chi)." They are structured in a repeating A-B-C- ... C'-B'-A' pattern. Brad McCoy, "Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature" in *CTS Journal*, Albuquerque, New Mexico: Chafer Theological Seminary, 9(2): (Fall 2003), 18-34.

²⁰² Benjamin W. Swinburnson, "The Rhetoric of the Post-Exilic Prophetic Reversal: Chiasmus in Haggai 1:1-15. A Structural and Biblical-Theological Analysis" in *K:NWTS* 23/3 (Dec.2008), 54-74.

²⁰³ A chiastic structure functions to reveal the central message like a "gem on a ring." See Arthur Walker-Jones, *Hebrew for Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Steven L Mackenzie (Atlanta: SBL, 2003) 192-193.

3. ...on the first day of month (1:1a)
- B
 1. Haggai the Prophet
 2. Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel – governor of Judah
 3. Joshua son of Jehozadak – the high priest
 4. These people.
 5. “...the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord” (i.e. the people do not work) (1:1b -2)
- C
 - “...your panelled houses... (1:4a)
 - D
 - “... this house lies in ruins.”(1:4b)
 - X
 1. “Thus says the Lord...” (1:5a, 7a)
 2. “Consider how you have fared...” (1:5b, 7b)
 3. “... sowed much... harvest little...” (1:6, 9a)
 - D’
 - “...my house lies in ruins...” (1:9c)
 - C’
 - “... hurry off to your own houses.”(1:9d)
- B’
 1. Haggai the messenger
 2. Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel – governor of Judah
 3. Joshua son of Jehozadak – the high priest
 4. These people.
 5. “...and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of host...” (i.e. the people work) (1:13-14)
- A’
 1. “... on the twenty-fourth day of the month,”
 2. “ ...in the sixth month...”
 3. “In the second year of King Darius...” (1:15-2:1)

At the centre of the first message (Hag 1:1-2:1) is the call for the people to consider how they have fared, to consider their journey and especially their current status. Their toils and labours amount to nothing, as revealed in the corresponding BB’ CC’ and DD.’ This is the result of immobility and the failure to work on the Lord’s house. Contrastingly, while the Lord’s house lies in ruins, the peoples’ houses are well built and prepared. In addition, the structure also highlights progression from the peoples’

idleness to being active. This is also the main message of the poetic section (Hag 1:3-11) which is embedded in this narrative unit. It is maintained by the redactor(s) with the addition of a superscription (1:1-2) and epilogue (1:12-15a), which not only serve to provide context for the reader to understand the message, but – the epilogue in particular – totally reverses the negative situation. In other words, the epilogue appears to resolve the issues and tensions reported between *Yahweh*, the people and the temple. At the same time the tension in form and genre continues as the prose provides the framework and uses the poetic section. Furthermore, the epilogue almost undermines the content of the central message.

Message Two

- A
 - 1. "In the second year of King Darius..."
 - 2. "...in the seventh month..."
 - 3. "... on the twenty-first day of the month,"
 - 4. "The word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai saying..." (2:1)
- B
 - Latter house is a disappointment compared to the former (2:3)
- C
 - Zerubbabel, Joshua, the people of the land encouraged to work on temple (2:4a)
- X
 - "... I am with you ... do not fear." (2:4b-5)
- C'
 - God works to fill the temple with splendour (2:6-8)
- B'
 - The splendour of the latter house shall be greater than the former (2:9)
- A'
 - 1. "On the twenty-fourth day..."
 - 2. "...of the ninth month..."
 - 3. "...in the second year of King Darius..."
 - 4. "The word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai saying..." (2:10)

In the second message (Hag 2:1–2:10), progression is seen in the status of the latter house when compared to the former. Evident is the movement from being a disappointment to having more splendour than the old. Moreover, initially the people

are encouraged to do the work; correspondingly, it is actually *Yahweh* that does the work. At the centre of message two is the assurance of *Yahweh's* presence amongst his people... "I am with you... do not fear." The question here is: why did the people need reassurance of *Yahweh's* presence? Were they beginning to lose faith? We note Assis' theory – how the structure plays a role in trying to resolve the peoples' struggle to accept the disappointing postexilic reality²⁰⁴ – and as we know from the long history of *Yahweh's* relationship with his people, questioning *Yahweh's* presence had become a norm and major characteristic of the people, especially when things do not go according to expectations. Thus, returning to the message above, the decline in faith clearly plays a role in the work on the *Yahweh's* house coming to a halt. The initial work may have already indicated to the people that this building lacked the greatness and splendour of the past temple. However, the turning point is the reassurance that as from then on, it is *Yahweh* that guides them to complete the task. It will be *Yahweh* that brings the splendour to the building and in effect exceed the magnificence of the former. Once again, the redactor(s) framework provides context like the first message

Message Three

- A 1. "On the twenty-fourth day..."
- 2. "...of the ninth month..."
- 3. "The word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai saying..." (2:10)
- B The rewards of the unclean (2:12-17)
- X "Consider from this day on... Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid..." (2:18)
- B' The rewards for the blessed (2:19)
- A' 1. "The word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai ..."

²⁰⁴Assis's theory is discussed further in the next section – "Intermediate Mode" – Assis Elie. "Haggai: Structure and Meaning." *Biblica* 87, no. 4 (2006): 531-41.

2. "...on the twenty-fourth day..."

3. "...of the month..." (2:20)

The corresponding BB' in the third message (Hag 2:10-2:20) discusses two different outcomes for two different statuses. The products from the toils of the unclean are struck by natural disasters, while the blessed thrive and, with them, their produce. The focal point is the importance of the laying of the foundations of the temple. Commencing the work on the temple is obviously the turning point. Alternatively, working on the temple can be the criterion that defines what is unclean and thus destined for hardship and what is blessed and destined for good things. The context provided by the redactor(s) to this discussion is Hag2:11-13, which is also the last section commonly designated as prose in the text. As discussed earlier, the provision of the information concerning the "priestly torah" provides context to comprehend the futile nature of the work of the people's hands. In effect, it strongly endorses the need to re-erect the temple.

Message Four

A Zerubbabel – governor of Judah (2:21a)

X The Lord intervenes to bring victory (2:21b-22)

A' Zerubbabel – like a signet ring, the Lord's chosen (2:23)

Finally, the fourth message (2:20-23) makes it quite obvious that its major concern is with the person of Zerubbabel who at first is referred to as the governor of Judah and then progresses to be *Yahweh's* signet ring. At the core of this short message is divine intervention: it is once again *Yahweh* who will bring change and raise

Zerubbabel's status as the future leader. The redactor(s) may have seen no reason to add further to this message and employed it as it is.

Overall, the redactor(s) hand is clear in each of the four messages, with a distinct impact from a rhetorical point of view. In the first three chiasms, the redactor(s) intervenes in the text, refocussing the emphasis of the message, while in the final chiasm, the redactor(s) draws back, allowing the original message to speak. Having intervened strongly in the first three, the redactor(s) is able to step back for the last, allowing it to say what needs to be said. So it is evident that despite an overarching nature of prose, poetic elements also strive to maintain their own as seen in a few of the discussions above.

The next step is to assess the four messages as a whole, focussing on the four focal points to construct an opinion.

- X 1. "Thus says the Lord..." (1:5a, 7a)
- 2. "Consider how you have fared..." (1:5b, 7b)
- 3. "... sowed much... harvest little..." (1:6, 9a)

- X "... I am with you ... do not fear." (2:4b-5)

- X "Consider from this day on... Since the day that the
 foundation of the Lord's temple was laid..." (2:18)

- X The Lord intervenes to bring victory (2:21b-22)

We commence by considering the status of their efforts. They sow much but do not gather the rewards, as the takings are few. Taking into account what follows, it appears that *Yahweh's* presence and affiliation with the people had great effect on their social and economic struggles. Yet, it is from such unfavourable conditions that the people are reassured of *Yahweh's* presence and encouraged to work on the temple.

Finally, they are reassured that the moment they continue the work, *Yahweh* will be active and ensure a victorious future for them.

The whole framework maintains the core messages and emphasis of each oracle. While the messages with their distinct focal points appear disconnected, it makes the impact of the redactor(s) much more effective as they have woven the oracles together in a narrative to address issues of the current situations. To come to the point, the temple is the key that initiates the turn-around for the people. The whole future for the people relies on their response towards the temple. If they decide to work, they will be blessed, if they remain immobile and continue to neglect the work required for the temple, they will continue to suffer the consequences.

Summary

To reiterate an important point, a casual observation of the locations of the prose-allocated verses would immediately indicate support for the familiar claim that the original oracles of the prophet were moulded into a narrative framework by a redactor(s).²⁰⁵ While this is quite obvious in our analysis, we must also note that the poetic features in the text remain recognizable and strong. As mentioned earlier, the redactor(s) may have felt their purposes were served better with maintaining the poetic form. Poetry is well known for its rich language and imagery which clearly portrays the emotion of the speaker. On that note, it appears that the fragments of poetry embedded in prose narratives may serve that very purpose, in other words, the prose narrative

²⁰⁵ John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 31. See also Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 11-12.

appears to take advantage of the emotional power of poetry to assist with the intended message.

As for the tension between poetry and prose, it is obvious that despite the dominance of the prosaic form, it is in constant tension with poetic elements. Although the latter appear to be undermined, they never truly disappear. Furthermore, the fact that the prose frame requires at times the raw rhetorical power of poetry may represent a flaw in its controlling efforts. This tension is highlighted in a constant interchange in the text with prose often appearing very poetic and vice versa. Note here especially prose elements that show up in poetic sections and vice versa. In terms of social and ideological conflict and tension, that discussion will be the purpose of the next chapter.

2.3. Intermediate Mode

The conjunction between prose and poetry has been discussed under various labels. Initially this juxtaposition was referred to as poetic prose. Hill – who uses the prose-particle count to assess the book of Malachi – simply refers to the form as prose; despite the presence of poetic features.²⁰⁶ Meyers and Meyers deemed such a description insufficient – when dealing with the books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 – and prefer the terms “oracular prose” or even “elevated prose.”²⁰⁷ In the case of the book of Haggai, Taylor and Clendenen see it as a classic example of “elevated prose.”²⁰⁸

At this point, we now move to the question of how the text attempts to resolve this tension. We pick up on the conclusion by Andersen and Freedman’s – who

²⁰⁶ Andrew Hill, *Malachi, A New Translation with Introduction Commentary*, AB, Vol. 25, edited by William F. Albright, David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc, 1998), 23-25.

²⁰⁷ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, lxiii – lxvii.

²⁰⁸ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 72-73.

developed the “prose particle count”²⁰⁹ which aims to distinguish between prose and poetry – that the majority of the prophetic literature cannot be clearly defined to either poetry or prose, thus suggesting “an intermediate mode.”²¹⁰ While we may not totally agree with the statement on poetry and prose, we do find interest in the intermediate mode that represents a form of resolution on a formal level.

The “prose-particle counts” theory is that certain particles – i.e. the relative pronoun אשר “which,” accusative marker את and definite article ה “the” – are used eight times as often in classical Hebrew prose texts than they are in classical Hebrew poetry. Freedman – in comparing the book of Haggai to other poetry and prose in the biblical text – suggests that the first two particles occur more than they do in poetic texts such as Psalms, Job and Proverbs. On the other hand, they are used less often than they occur in prose texts such as Genesis, Deuteronomy and Joshua.²¹¹ This then appears to place Haggai between OT texts which are definite prose and those that are obviously poetic. In other words, elevated or oracular prose characteristically portrays significant features of poetry, but at the same time maintain fundamentals of prose literature.²¹² We shall now refer to this conjunction under another label which relates to the book of Haggai.

²⁰⁹ The ‘prose particle count’ method “aims at distinguishing prose and poetry based on the density of certain grammatical words that are recognized as being common in prose narrative and infrequent in unambiguous poetic texts.” Extraction from John A. Cook, “Hebrew Language” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by J. G. McConville, and Mark J. Boda (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012) 307.

²¹⁰ Anderson and Freedman (1989) 145.

²¹¹ Freedman, “Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry”, 6-7.

²¹² Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 72-73.

Brief Apologetic Historical Account

While the most basic division of the text of Haggai would be by chapter,²¹³ the most popular division closely follows what sets the book of Haggai apart from most of the prophetic writings, that is, the conspicuous chronological staging of the book's four messages or oracles.²¹⁴

1. Hag. 1:1-15 – 1st day of 6th month, 2nd year of Darius.
2. Hag. 2:1 – 9 – 21st day of 7th month, 2nd year of Darius.
3. Hag. 2:10 – 19 – 24th day of 9th month, 2nd year of Darius.
4. Hag. 2:20 – 23 – 24th of 9th month, 2nd year of Darius.

The four oracles are clearly identified by introductory statements or superscriptions that serve as boundary markers (Hag 1:1-2; 2:1-2; 10-11; 20-21). As noted earlier in this chapter, these prophetic superscriptions usually state the prophet, his ancestry and place of origin. Furthermore, names of kings during whose reign(s) the prophet was active are declared and concluded by an indication of the subject matter of the prophecy (Isa 1:1; Jer. 1:1-3; Ezek 1:2-3; Hos1:1; Amos 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1; Zech 1:1). Others however do not employ all of these characteristics, such as Daniel, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Malachi. Although the question of ideology will be the core of the next phase, initial ideological discussions will be unavoidable in our attempt to explain the layout of the text, as the nature of the form is ideological, i.e. the form is ideological in its attempt to resolve social contradictions.²¹⁵ While we have

²¹³ Some basically divide the book of Haggai according to the two chapters. See Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, xii.

²¹⁴ Every structural proposal is unique in its own right, but, they do not wander too far from this backbone.

²¹⁵ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44.

already begun the analysis concerning the organization of the oracles, or “raw material,” further structural analysis is still needed.

Elie Assis proposes a possible significance of the text’s structure. Assis – who also treats the book as a unified literary work – argues that the structure is part of the prophet’s rhetoric to “resolve” the people’s struggle to come to terms with a disappointing postexilic reality, which was far from what they had expected.²¹⁶ Although no reference is made to Jameson, we may argue that his conclusion appears to be somewhat unconsciously Jamesonian in nature. At this point, Assis correctly points out that structural patterns are deliberate and serve specific purposes for the author(s). In the four messages, Assis reveals a “progression” of thought from “admonition to consolation”²¹⁷ in the first two oracles and a repetition of the progression in the final two messages.

At this point I wish to make an observation relating to the nature of this study. To bring into perspective Assis’ findings it would be appropriate to introduce Kessler’s alternative description, i.e. A/B/A/B.²¹⁸ In a more strict pattern, Assis’ findings would really look something like this, i.e. A-B/A-B, showing the progression in the two subsections. However, the key to Assis’ analysis is that the book of Haggai is treated as a unified literary work. Progression in its most basic sense normally gives forth the impression of moving to a more advanced state, whether the outcome awaiting at the end of the journey be favourable or not, e.g. a favourable progression can be perceived as getting closer to achieving a degree while an unfavourable form of progression would be the progression in the state of a disease. Thus, the focus then should be on

²¹⁶ Elie Assis, "Haggai: Structure and Meaning." *Biblica* 87, no. 4 (2006): 531-41.

²¹⁷ Assis, "Haggai: Structure and Meaning," 536.

²¹⁸ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 251.

understanding the concept of progression, as initial instincts would perceive a conflict between the claim of a “progression” throughout both structures and the “alternating” patterns.

For this study, the alternating pattern does not necessarily have to contradict progression, but is rather part of a wider understanding of the concept. In other words, tensions and struggles occur in order for an advance in movement. Progression to a more advanced state is not about smooth and unchallenged journeys, for they are full of struggles, mistakes and setbacks which are all part of the learning process and moving forward. Rhetorically, the structural movement back and forth can symbolize friction, tension and struggle. We may take note that such an examination can easily be categorised in the unfavourable structural analysis of “binary opposition,” nonetheless, as Boer has concluded, even though Jameson labours to avoid this method in search of the initial contradiction, Jameson himself was not always successful.²¹⁹

Building on these structural discussions, we now move into the discussion of form. Here, we wish to explore a specific form initially called the “historical short account,” which is later referred to as a “brief apologetic historical account.”²²⁰ N. Lohfink has been credited with the identifying of this genre in his study of Jeremiah 26, 36; and 37-41 (1978). Although Lohfink does not discuss in detail distinct features of the genre, Petersen has been able to identify a list of characteristics from Lohfink’s work:

1. It is a relatively short prose narrative; the longest example runs some four chapters.
2. The narrative focuses on an important person or persons.

²¹⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44.

²²⁰ Petersen renames the genre with the addition of “apologetic” as he feels that each of the texts Lohfink studies appears to be making very specific points. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 34-35.

3. These accounts are narratives that purport to be history, i.e., they provide a sequence of events often with chronological or other explicit time markers.
4. The stories are made up of several different scenes.
5. Dates regularly mark the boundaries between the individual scenes.
6. The scenes comprising the accounts are often of unequal length.
7. Such accounts often have a virtual apologetic focus, e.g., the Egyptian *gola* is wrong or Josiah's reforms are good.²²¹

The book of Haggai definitely satisfies most of these criteria. It is brief, with 38 verses divided into two chapters. The narrative focuses on the Yehud community during the Persian reign, in particular the leaders and the prophet who are called by name in the narrative; i.e. Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the High Priest, and Haggai the prophet. Darius the Persian monarch is also mentioned three times. Although the occurrences of the Persian's name may appear an indirect reference, his influence on his empire and subjects – including the Yehud community – should not be taken lightly, let alone the influence on the literature.²²² I have already mentioned how the dates function as boundary markers to the four messages. Finally, given that texts normally contain more than one point of view either co-existing with or against one another, the book of Haggai definitely has apologetic goal(s), which will become clearer as my argument develops.

²²¹ This list is an extraction from Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 34-35.

²²² King Darius' influence on the cultures of his subjects are both direct and indirect. Directly, the king not only instructed the return of his subjects to build their temples, but another Persian policy was the codification of traditional laws; meaning that the imperial rule had direct participation in the legal activities of the province to ensure that the behaviour of their subjects remained within the precincts of the Persian interests. Samuel Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period" in *After the Exile: Essays in the Honour of Rex Mason*, ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996), 139. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 239-242. On a more indirect note, we can assume that a percentage of the Persian interests being inscribed in the cultures and literatures of their subjects.

Summary

We are left with the question: how do we consider this intermediate mode? Do we consider this conjunction as a third genre or as simply a party locked in struggle for dominance with prose and poetry? Or do we consider it an attempted resolution? Can the conjunction be both? To recap: while the Hebrew style of the book of Haggai is characterized on the one hand by certain awkwardness, at times we do find on the other hand an effective use of certain rhetorical devices. In other words, the book maintains some of the oral flavour of its sermons, while also indicating a more intricate style that is characteristic of a literary work.²²³ The intermediate mode can also be seen in terms of formal resolution to the conflict, i.e. the existence and acceptance of this form – as in distinct from genre – as a norm draws the attention of the audience and readers from the underlying conflict, in other words, this form papers over the tension between poetry and prose. According to Petersen, this new style of prose – where the speeches of prophets were incorporated to shape a form of historical narrative – was a major development during the sixth century.²²⁴ Therefore, in terms of formal resolution, a number of points should be made.

First, although poetry accounts for most of the verses as per the proposed division, it is clear that the fate of these original oral traditions are very much at the mercy of the later redactors of the book who presumably were responsible for imposing the prose narrative elements to form the framework that exists today. The physical majority appear to have been subdued by an imposing minority. Second, the continuing existence of the poetic form is allowed only due to the fact that it serves well the purpose

²²³ Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 68-70.

²²⁴ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 34.

of the greater framework, i.e. the prose narrative. Third, this new historical prose and poetry should still be perceived as distinct within their own rights; they should not be seen in terms of succession but rather as coexisting. This sort of perception is also seen in the distinct stages in the Hebrew language, i.e. a coexisting pre-exilic and a postexilic, and not merely as a succession.²²⁵ Does this not already resonate with certain political systems or regimes? At this point, I do not wish to get too far ahead of myself and say that these literary constructions deliberately mirror certain social systems and patterns of its era, but we can be confident in a strong association between the text and the society that produced it. After all, the life of a society – whether it be social, political, economical, historical or spiritual – will always find itself inscribed within its literature.

Overall, it is evident that the formal contradiction occurs between the poetic and prose features of the text. It is a conflict that continues to exist, however, the introduction of an intermediate mode contributes to the illusion that a solution to the conflict has been implemented. The brief apologetic historical account can be seen as a formal closure or containment of the continuing conflict. We are almost ready to move into the ideological discussions – which is the purpose of the following chapter – so the following analysis may be seen as the preparation for this transition from formal to ideological discussions.

²²⁵ Rendsburg notes that despite a general uniformity in the Hebrew language, a certain progress from an earlier stage to a later is noticeable. These stages are associated with two respective periods in the history of the people of Israel: before and during the Babylonian exile, and after the exile. These are not two successive styles, i.e. chronologically but rather they are two distinct styles which co-exist. This assumption means that books written in the Persian era may have used the *EBH* (early biblical Hebrew), on the other hand it also opens the door for the books written in *SBH* (standard biblical Hebrew - earlier EBH) traditionally dated to the first temple period to be dated in the Persian era. – Gary A. Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai” in *Language and Nature: Papers presented to John Huehnergard on the occasion of his 60th birthday*, edited by Rebecca Hasselbach, Na’ama Pat-el, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, no.67 (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2012), 329.

3. Interpretation

Search for contradiction (moving from form of text through ideological antinomy and closure to contradiction in base).²²⁶

The task now moves from the identification of the formal contradiction to the search for antinomies. The transitional function of this stage is very important, although most works assume their function in the interpretational process without any real explanation or awareness of their role. For Boer however, the shift from text or superstructure to the base or context is mediated by ideologies, i.e. “contradiction in the realm of the text is transformed into antinomy (or aporia) in the realm of ideology.”

The move to the realm of ideology also functions as a “strategy of containment.” It provides the illusion of totality which enables binary opposites to live together in harmony.²²⁷ In other words, we are moving to identify a contradiction that shall function as the main antinomy, but more importantly at this stage to discuss the strategy of containment.

3.1. Honor and Not-Honor: From Text to Semiotic Analysis

To recap the discussion on Greimas’s semiotic square in the first chapter, the importance of this analysis is that it not only assists in the articulating of the main antinomy or ideological oppositions, but initial reflections are made of these textual tensions at a more social level. In other words, the discussion moves towards discussing various social classes represented by the binary opposites in the text.²²⁸ The text of Haggai is full of contradictions – different readers and viewpoints always identify

²²⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

²²⁷ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 48.

²²⁸ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 44. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 85-89.

different or varying conflicts – which shall be employed in our discussions. However, the one that will be the centre of attention involves the concept of כְּבוֹד “glory/honor.”²²⁹ Not only is this concept a central element to the temple and the well-being of the Yehud community – in other words very central to the book – but its contradictory presence in the text would successfully elude the attention of most first time readers of the book of Haggai. It is this elusive nature that makes it central not only in its defining role as the main ideological antinomy, but also by being part of the imaginary resolution in the text.

In general, different groups and classes struggle over the definition of “honor and shame.” Continuing power struggles amongst these various groups mean a constant redefining of these concepts – note that conflicts can also arise as one finds it the ultimate duty to defend individual or family honor.²³⁰ In other words, honor and shame were intertwined with social status, which could change over time, e.g. honor acquired by means of military victory (Exo 14:4, 17-18; 2 Kgs 14:10) or it could also be lost through defeat which in effect resulted in shame (Isa 23:9; Lam 1:8). Also worth noting is that honor is generally owed by an inferior to a superior:²³¹ examples include from young to elderly (Lev. 19:32; Isa. 3:5; Lam. 5:12); worshipper to deity (Exo 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Hag.1:8, Mal. 1:6); child to parent (Ezek. 22:7; Prov. 19:26); and even minor deities to *Yahweh* (Ps. 29:1-2).

²²⁹ David Clines discusses honor as the first part of a three-fold conflict he proposes for the book of Haggai. This work in agreement with Clines but perceives honor as rather the main contradiction with the many other notable conflicts as related to and playing minor roles in the main issue of honor in the text. See David J. A. Clines, “Haggai’s Temple: Constructed, Deconstructed and Reconstructed,” in *The Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* vol.7 no.1 (1993), 51-77.

²³⁰ Balu Savarikannu, “Expressions of Honor and Shame in Lamentations 1” in *AJPS* 21.1 (February 2018), 81.82.

²³¹ Saul M Olyan, “Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and its Environment,” In *JBL* 115/2 (1996), 204.

We also find conflict between *Yahweh's* perspective of honor as opposed to that of foreign nations. While *Yahweh's* standpoint is founded on a positive bond with *Yahweh* (Ps 113:4-8, 108:6-7), the nations assume honor is constituted by wealth and power (Ezek 27:25, Isa 23:8, 2 Kgs 14:10).²³² The Israelites in their long history have always been a *Yahweh*-centred people and thus it was expected of them to maintain a good relationship with *Yahweh* for honor – although we know at times they appear to move back and forth between these perspectives. However, no matter the circumstance, these concepts had great effect on the code of ethics for the various groups.²³³ In the case of the Haggai text, honor and shame are deeply intertwined with the debate on the work of *Yahweh's* temple.

In the text, the word's root occurs 4 times (Hag. 1:8; 2:3, 7, 9), but, as we shall discuss, the concept has an even greater underlying function in the understanding of the prophet's words. Let us briefly consider a certain progression of thought in these verses. Although this trend of thought may already be obvious in the physical journey of the temple from the days of Solomon to the current state, the concept of 'glory' represents something larger than the physical body of the temple, society, and the people.

Haggai 1:8

עָלֵי הַהָר וְהִבְאֵתֶם עֵץ וּבְנֵי הַבַּיִת וְאִרְצָהּ כִּי וְאֶפְכְּדָה (כְּתִיב וְאֶפְכְּדָה) אָמַר יְהוָה

Go up (to) the mountain and bring wood and build the house. And I will be pleased (with) in it and I will be honoured says the Lord.

²³² Ronald R. Mudge, "Yahweh's Counter-Cultural View of Honor and Shame" in *Conversations with the Biblical World*, 34:2014, 118.

²³³ 'Honor and Shame' based cultures exist mainly in communal societies as it is the group and not the individual which dominates the culture. They determine the ethical code. Note that Westerners would debate ethics of a decision on the merits of right and wrong, and Arab would debate ethics based on the honor associated with an act. See Muller, *Honor and Shame*, 50.

In 1:8, we note two points. First is the stative employment of the verb which implies the emphasis on the state of being. Here, the yearning is to be honoured and is thus a state of being that is yet to be achieved. Second, the relationship between the building of the temple and *Yahweh* being honoured – although we are still yet to clarify what being honoured means in the book – is made clear here. Thus, the concept of ‘glory’ continues with this dualistic understanding²³⁴ in the book of Haggai, i.e. building the temple restores the glory which in effect brings honor to *Yahweh*.

Haggai 2:3

מִי בְכֶם הַנִּשְׁאָר אֲשֶׁר רָאָה אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה בְּכַבּוּדוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן וְלָמָּה אַתֶּם רֹאִים אֹתוֹ עַתָּה הֲלֹא כְמוֹהוּ כְּאִין בְּעֵינֵיכֶם

Who in you (the one who) remain which saw this house in her former glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not (in comparison) like nothing in your eyes?

Haggai 2:7

וְהִרְעַשְׁתִּי אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וּבָאוּ תְמִדַּת כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וּמָלְאֹתִי אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה כְּבוֹד אֲמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

...and I will shake all the nations, and the desire (splendour) of all the nations shall come and I will fill this house (with) glory says the Lord of hosts.

In 2:3, reference is made back to the time when this desired state of being was achieved, i.e. in the Solomonic temple. The comparison made with the temple’s current state further highlights the necessity for the people to work on the current building. Rhetorically, the yearning for the restoration of glory is made clearer and louder. Assurance then follows in 2:7 as *Yahweh* confirms the restoration of the glory. First, it is

²³⁴ I tend to move in between the concepts of ‘glory’ and ‘honor’ in the discussions. For this work I use them synonymously as representing this relationship between *Yahweh*’s honor and the glory of the temple.

noteworthy that the restoration of *Yahweh's* glory comes at the expense of the nations. To speculate as to what this could imply will be discussed later but the relationship between *Yahweh* and the nations is once again highlighted here. However, we now see the transition from the idea of yearning and wishing to becoming more physical and being in the process of restoration of the glory (despite this still being a futuristic view.)

Haggai 2:9

גָּדוֹל יְהוָה כְּבוֹד הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה הָאֶחָד מִן־הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וּבִמְקוֹם הַזֶּה אֶתֵּן שְׁלֹום
נֵאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

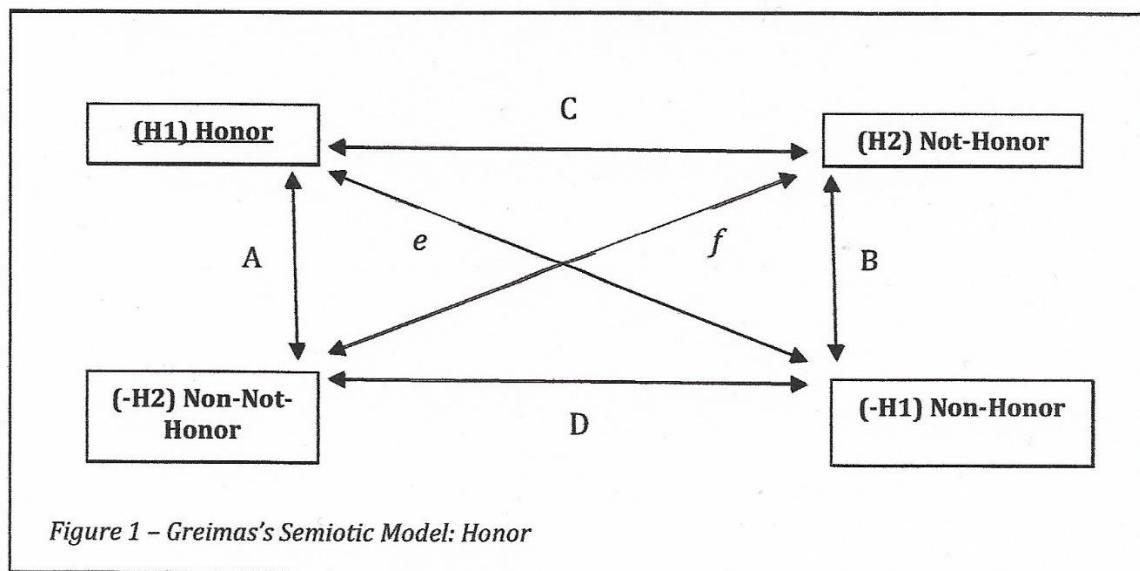
The latter glory of this house shall be greater than (from) the former says the Lord of hosts, and I will give peace in this place says the Lord of hosts.

Finally, 2:9 predicts that the glory of the current temple shall be greater in comparison to its predecessor in the Solomonic era. Not only does this emphasize the yearning but it also functions to give courage to the people to do the work. While this assurance of future glory plays a vital role in the suppression of the conflict (see the following section), a contradiction arises: on the one hand, there is the idea that the people can bring honor if only they work on the temple (1:8); on the other hand, as Clines correctly points out, this is undermined by the fact that the people are deemed unclean and the work of their hands is unclean. Thus, working on the temple defiles it, therefore deeming the impossibility of the people to bring honor (2:10-14).²³⁵ This for me would be the underlying contradiction.

As we prepare to make the transition from the formal discussion to the ideological – although we may have already begun to develop some ideological questions – let us develop further the analysis of “honor” with the application of

²³⁵ David Clines uses deconstruction to analyse Haggai whereas he raises this contradiction.

Greimas's semiotic square. The connection between the formal contradictions and indications of possible social contradictions can be identified through the dual function of the semiotic square.²³⁶ Therefore, we shall map out our overarching contradiction with the possibilities that surround it. This should situate our discussion in preparation for and anticipation of the thorough ideological discussions – of the text – which shall be the efforts of the following chapter. Through these discussions we shall gradually move closer to contradictions on a more social level.



In the top corners we find the basis of our square or rather the main contradiction in 'Honor' (H1) as opposed to 'Not-Honor' (H2).²³⁷ In the lower corners are the negations of the main terms, i.e. 'Non-Not-Honor' (-H2) as a contradiction to H2 and 'Non-Honor' (-H1) which contradicts H1. Further points of analysis are the various axes represented

²³⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 48-49.

²³⁷ Although I am already using the word shame as opposing honor in these discussions, I have refrained from using it in the diagram for the reasons that, first, it does not occur in the text of Haggai, and second, keeping the root honor and its opposition as not-honor highlights the contradictory and contrary effects clearly. Henceforth, I shall continue to employ the word "shame" as a synonym to not-honor.

by letters A – F. Here, the ideological discussion now gradually moves into the vicinity of social class structures and our immediate task at this point is to merely initiate the analysis that we shall undertake in full in the following chapter. While axes *e* and *f* represent further possibilities and views in society, I wish to limit my focus on the outer axes only.

First, axis 'A' represents the combination H1 and -H2, i.e. those who would be classed as having honor, but also those that may not be directly associated with honor yet are located here since they definitely do not belong to the opposing class of shame. Therefore, we may say that the amalgamation in axis A is an intensifying of those who are perceived to have honor. In contrast to this is axis B – i.e. H2 + -H1 – which represents those who are classed as the shame of a society, but also those who are not associated with honor. Logically, the effect of the combination in axis B – like axis A – would be to intensify the dimension of shame in a society. However, for our purposes, I try to maintain an ideological mindset which should also be evident in the language used; therefore, I prefer to see axis B first and foremost as a weakening of axis A. In other words, the emphasis remains with A. Despite discussing the views and perspectives represented in B, the real concern is to how these perceptions relate to that of axis A. The assumption here is that the aspiration and the chief desire in the society is to achieve or otherwise be associated in any way with A.

Axis C is the combination between honor (H1) and not-honor or shame (H2). This social group is complex in the sense that it can relate to both ends of the spectrum; they play the double role of intensifying and weakening the main term at the same time. On

the other end, axis D is seen as more neutral in the sense that it does not necessarily associate with any of the conflicting groups.²³⁸

Let us be reminded of the purpose of this section: the analysis has now transitioned from the formal discussions in the superstructure section to the identification of the concept of honor as the main antinomy. We commenced with an analysis of honor on a textual level, and then moved to semiotic analysis, which is an initial step towards the discussion of ideological contradictions of the following chapter. In other words, this transition functions not only as a way of concluding the preceding analysis, but more importantly in anticipation of the next chapter.

3.2. Strategies of Containment

If we were to refer to discussion of the text in the beginning, we found that the tension between prose and poetry dominated our analysis. Although prose had the upper hand on poetic features, it was noted that prose itself could not afford to be rid of the raw rhetorical power of the poetic elements. The interchangeable and unexpected positionings of the two genres in the text was testament to the ongoing struggle. In an initial perception of a resolution to the tension, we noted that it came in the form of the brief apologetic historical account. Not only did this form incorporate the competing genres but it also presented the illusion of a unified, harmonious representation of its contents. In our transition from the formal to ideological oppositions, we come to employ Greimas's semiotic square in which we had just analysed the contradictory nature of the concept of honor in the text but more importantly this conflict exposed

²³⁸ Initial analysis follows closely concepts and terminologies presented in Roland Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible* (London / New York: T & T Clark International, 2003). 185 – 188.

glimpses of potential social classes in conflict. In other words, the transitional treatment of the semiotic square leads us in to the final point concerning strategies of containment: ultimately, this initial effort at resolving the contradiction seems to fail, although it tries to prevent such a failure by closing down that possibility – hence the strategy of containment. We now conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of strategies of containment. For Jameson, this refers to ways in which a text creates the illusion that it is complete and self-sufficient.²³⁹ In other words, we are asking the question: how does the text not only draw the reader's attention away from the contradiction(s) but establish within the reader's mindset that whatever conflict there may have been is now resolved (or appears to be resolved)? How does the text suppress the main ideological antinomy?

In his analysis, Clines clearly points out the contradiction between the reactions of the leaders towards the temple as opposed to the not-so enthusiastic response of the people in general. For Clines, the attempt by the text to suppress or resolve this conflict between the leaders and the people is achieved by the idea that the people are obedient and get straight to work on the temple.²⁴⁰ If we are to pick up our point made earlier on Hag 1:8, i.e. the intertwined relationship between the work on the temple and honor, then we are led to the conclusion that just as the people's obedience appears to suppress the continuing conflict between leader and the people, it also has a similar effect on the perception of the overarching contradiction: their obedience means that they agree to work on the temple which in effect brings honor. Thus already the text shows signs of closure and completeness, however ideologically papering over the reality which is; a

²³⁹ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 52-54. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 49.

²⁴⁰ David Clines, "Haggai's Temple: Constructed, Deconstructed and Reconstructed" in *SJOT*, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (1993), 70-72.

continuing contradiction regarding the attaining of honor. The suppression can be seen as further solidified with *Yahweh's* words²⁴¹ of assurance in Hag 2:7.

...וּמִלֵּאתִי אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה כְּבוֹד אֲמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

...and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of Hosts.

4. Base

As mentioned earlier, the base section shall not be deployed at this level due to the inaccessible nature of the day to day events in the history of the ancient societies including that of Haggai's. This fragment is postponed for now until a later time in the entire interpretational process.²⁴² For now, we are ready to move into the ideological discussion and that of social classes in more depth, that is the purpose of the next chapter.

Summary

In light of the Jamesonian approach, our task in this chapter was the understanding of the symbolic act which represses the embedded conflicts and tension in the text. Commencing with the observation at the formal level, we identified the form of "brief apologetic historical account" which played this role in our analysis. We noted the continuous tension which occurred between poetic and prose features in the text, this tension appeared to be resolved with the introduction of this third form. The brief

²⁴¹ Boer argues that through the use of *Yahweh's* word is one major way in which ideological closure is exercised. Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 137.

²⁴² Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 51 - 52.

apologetic historical form not only provides that illusion, but it also functions in a capacity as a formal closure.

From here, the analysis moves to search of the main antinomy which is the initial step towards the discussion of ideologies. The appropriation of Greimas's semiotic square becomes very useful not only in mapping out the ideological oppositions in the text, but it also initiates the move to recognizing opposing sides on a more social level. In our analysis we pointed out the major conflict in the issue of "honor." While the people are assured that their actions and rebuilding of the temple will bring honor to Yahweh, later in text we find that the people's labours do not have any impact on the issue as honor is something which is only achieved by Yahweh. This antinomy remained difficult to identify as it had been contained by the harmonious account that the people simply obeyed Haggai and did all that he asked.

We are now ready to move to the next section in which we shall have a more social-centred focus. In other words, we shall now be looking to associate these existing conflicts and tensions with respective social groups and classes in society.

Chapter Three

Horizon Two – The Social Phase

The second horizon / social phase deals specifically with ideologies. While in the first phase the analysis of the text was more literal-centred, focusing on its form, identifying signs of internal conflicts and ideological tensions, here the text is now seen as playing a role within the world of ideologies. As is already mentioned in the theoretical discussions of the first chapter, Jameson perceives this level as an allegorical key between phases one and three.²⁴³ In the same manner we have seen how Greimas's square makes the connection between certain concepts and the narrative itself; in addition and along the same lines this connection is also mediated in this second phase by ideologemes. Thus, the quest at the superstructural level will be for ideologemes. The interpretive stage then moves from the text and ideology to search of contradiction in light of class conflict. The base stage will work in conjunction with social-historical sources in order to identify conflicting classes within society.

1. Superstructure

Focus on ideology (especially ideologemes, religion, and ideology and utopia).²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 56.

²⁴⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

To recall briefly the relationships between forms as per the discussion in the previous chapter, we concluded that whilst the poetic core of the book made up the bulk of the writing, we find its sustaining existence to be at the mercy of the prosaic intentions, i.e. it only exists because it serves the interests of the narrative. Thus, these poetic features are in a constant struggle with its prosaic counterpart for supremacy. However, as noted earlier, there is also a possibility of a third player in the mix; i.e. the intermediate mode – the brief apologetic historical account – which appears to provide the illusion of a peaceful existence at least from a formal perspective. We now turn our attention to identifying and discussing possible ideologemes from the respective opposing viewpoints.

1.1. Royal Ideology

Before we move into the discussion, we must first acknowledge that there is no direct mention of the institution of the Israelite monarchy in the book of Haggai. In other words, considering the close social and literary history in particular between the Israelite prophets and the monarchs, the latter can be perceived as a noticeable “absence”²⁴⁵ in the text. From an ideological stance, such omissions may have an opposite effect and – in this case – actually work in favour of the institution of the Israelite monarchy, i.e. by highlighting its importance. In addition, discussions

²⁴⁵ Marxists critics also refer to these absences as “gaps.” Absences and gaps are seen as a result of the notion where some things are best left unsaid. See Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production: With a New Introduction by Terry Eagleton and a New Afterword by the Author*, trans. by Geoffrey Wall (London/New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), 95. See also Yee, “Ideological Criticism,” 143.

regarding other indirect references to the Israelite monarchy also function to support that the “royal ideology” be recognized as one ideologeme within the text.²⁴⁶

First, we shall identify and discuss possible signs of throne language, or rather that which is closely affiliated with the royal institution – in particular the Israelite monarchy. For this task, it must be said that the most obvious section in the book of Haggai to commence such a search would have to be the concluding eschatological word of hope regarding Zerubbabel (Hag.2:21-22). The phrase *אֲנִי מַרְעִישׁ* “*I am shaking*” in v.21 also occurs in v.6. The root *רָעַשׁ* “*to shake*,” however, occurs three times as it appears in a different form in v.7. The use of this root in *Hiphil* can also be found associated with *Yahweh* in disclosure and combat (Ps 60:2; Job 39:20; Isa 14:13; Ezek 31:16; Hag 2:6, 7).²⁴⁷ Its participle form designates forthcoming action by *Yahweh*.

This first-person theme continues with the next three verbs, i.e. *וְהִפַּכְתִּי* “*I will overthrow*,” *וְהִשָּׁמַדְתִּי* “*I will destroy*” and *וְהִפַּכְתִּי* “*I will overthrow*.” The root *הָפַךְ* “*turn*” or “*overturn*” is normally affiliated with the overthrowing and destruction of thrones and nations, e.g. the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:21, 25, 29), overthrowing of cities and nations (Jer 20:16; Amos 4:11; Lam 4:6).²⁴⁸ This language – of overthrowing and destruction of thrones and nations – has been argued to resemble

²⁴⁶ James Bowick, “Characters in Stone: Royal Ideology and Yehudite Identity in the Behistun Inscription and the Book of Haggai” in Gary Knoppers & Kenneth A. Ristau, *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 107-108.

²⁴⁷ Mark J Boda, *Haggai/Zechariah* (NIV Application Commentary: Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 124.

²⁴⁸ Bowick, “Characters in Stone: Royal Ideology and Yehudite Identity in the Behistun Inscription and the Book of Haggai,” 111.

that of the royal psalms 2 and 110; furthermore, it resembles a psalm of David such as Psalm 100.²⁴⁹

The root לקח “take” in v.23, although is a common verb warrants its association here with the Davidic king due to its literary context, i.e. its occurrence in the midst of other language associated with the Davidic dynasty. Furthermore, Petersen argues that despite it being common in the Hebrew language, the use of לקח “take” in combination with a member of the Davidic lineage as its object normally is associated with statements of election, or in this case throne succession. For Petersen – although he does not provide any references – the root was used by Israelite prophets to show that *Yahweh* had chosen a person, i.e. despite being followed by the root בחר “choose” later in the verse.²⁵⁰

Another throne associated word is the root עבד “servant” in v.23. Although the root has many connotations in the bible – e.g. slave (Gen 24:2), soldier (2 Sam 2:12), minister (Jer 36:24) – our focus is fixed on its royal undertone especially as its association with David appears to have developed into a proper title; “my servant David” (see 2 Sam 7:5, 8; Ps 132:10; 1 Kgs 11:32, 36; 1 Chr 17:4; Isa 37:35).²⁵¹ Although Zerubbabel is not yet king, he is addressed in the same manner as David. Moreover, although the Israelite monarchy ended in the Babylonian exile, the use of the word “servant” remained affiliated with the Davidic lineage in particular with the hope for that future king (Ezek 34:23; 37:24, 25).²⁵² It is in this light that the royal notion of the

²⁴⁹ Petersen, *Haggai*, 100.

²⁵⁰ Petersen, *Haggai*, 103.

²⁵¹ Petersen, *Haggai*, 103. Wolff, *Haggai*, 105.

²⁵² Petersen, *Haggai*, 103.

word “servant” is reemphasized especially in conjunction with the person of Zerubbabel. Before we leave this point, we must briefly mention that this royal conception of the word appears to have continued to develop further – outside of the confines of the Israelite monarch – to refer to foreign rulers. This discussion will be expanded under the section on imperialism.

Second, we shall now take a leaf out of Yee’s intrinsic analysis of the book of Judges and appropriate it in a similar fashion with the book of Haggai, with the analysis and interpretation of the notable absence of the king. For Yee, the starting point is the refrain that continually reminds the reader that there was “no king in Israel” (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). From a social perspective the reader is given the idea of the total chaos in which Israel currently finds itself. Furthermore the fact that their covenantal relationship with *Yahweh* is also at a low point is emphasized continuously by the idea that the people continue to do “what was right in their own eyes” (Judg 19:6; 21:25). Standing alone in their own rights, these refrains are merely stating facts, but to combine as the book of Judges does, speaks volumes ideologically. It appears that the people continuously fail and rebel against *Yahweh* as long as there is no king. From an alternative angle, the people sin because there is no king to lead them, thus, indirectly we have here the promoting of royal interests and the push for the support of the monarchy.²⁵³ I believe that in the same manner there is an element of the book of Haggai that is committed towards support of the royal institution.

²⁵³ Yee, “Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body.” (2007), 142-157. David Jobling depicts the absence of the king as a utopian desire for a society free from oppression, i.e. an ideal world. Cited in Roland Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel* (Louisville / Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 198.

First and foremost, to establish the ominous absence of a Davidic king we may take note of the superscriptions. As we have already discussed in the previous chapter, the prophetic superscriptions usually dated the extent of a prophet's ministry by listing the corresponding kings of usually both Israel and Judah. In the book of Haggai, these Israelite kings are substituted by the ruling Persian monarch, "king Darius" (Hag 1:1; 2:1, 10). I would agree with Bowick that the text does not do anything to soften this reality for the reader compared to the writings of other post-exilic figures, e.g. Zechariah and Ezra; if anything, it appears that the absence of a reigning Davidic king is being highlighted. We discuss the impact of the root מלך *"king,"* which qualifies Darius (Hag 1:1, 15). Although the text of Zechariah eventually makes use of the root (Zech 7:1), it is also a notable absence from two earlier references to Darius, especially in the superscription (Zech 1:1, 7). Ezra on the other hand does employ the root (Ezra 1:1) to qualify Cyrus; however, Ezra does at least make it clear that Cyrus is the king of Persia.²⁵⁴ Right from the outset the text hurls this harsh reality before the readers: king Darius is now the relevant authority, and the logical default as there continued to be no reigning Davidic king.²⁵⁵ However, despite this early establishment and undermining of the Davidic throne, the latter does not totally disappear, but rather continues to exist in the text. This obvious emphasis on the character of Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20-23) is the climax to a royal ideal which develops discreetly throughout the text.

This leads us then to the person of Zerubbabel in the narrative ... אֶל־זְרֻבָּבֶל בֶּן־שִׁעְלִיָּה ... *"to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah..."* (Hag

²⁵⁴ Bowick, "Characters in Stone: Royal Ideology and Yehudite Identity in the Behistun Inscription and the Book of Haggai," 109.

²⁵⁵ W. P. Brown, *Obadiah through Malachi*. Westminster Bible Companion, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 122.

1:1). At the outset Zerubbabel is called *בֶּן־שְׁאֵלְתִּיאל* “the son of Shealtiel” (also Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2, 23, Ezra 3:8). This immediately identifies Zerubbabel as a descendant of David, which opens Haggai’s climactic ending to the interpretation that it may be an eschatological yearning and expectation that *Yahweh* will restore his authority and the Davidic throne. We take note here – although it will not be discussed in any depth²⁵⁶ – a certain discrepancy in the biblical traditions: in 1 Chr 3:17-19, Zerubbabel is recorded as the son of Pedaiah rather than Shealtiel; however, despite the difference in records, both agree that Zerubbabel is of the royal Davidic lineage.

Also noteworthy here is that fact that Zerubbabel is always listed first when referring to the Yehud community, i.e. Zerubbabel, Joshua the High Priest and then the people (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4). The question is: do these lists have hierarchical implications? While Redditt states Zerubbabel and Joshua respectfully represent the institutions of the monarchy and priesthood, he does not make any hierarchical assumptions.²⁵⁷ Meyers and Meyers on the other hand claim from a sociological perspective that both offices were designated more or less equal authority over Yehud. The co-existence of Zerubbabel and Joshua was a “duality of leadership” to uphold both political and religious authority, which was usually exercised solely by the monarchs of the past.²⁵⁸ Whilst I agree with Meyers & Meyers, it is clear that the “base” is not our preferred starting point of interpretation but rather the superstructure, i.e. the text. Therefore, if we take into account our discussion of the final oracle to Zerubbabel and the strong presence of royal connotations, as a textual climax it then puts more weight

²⁵⁶For a detail discussion on this discrepancy, see Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 10-12.

²⁵⁷ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 17-18.

²⁵⁸Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 17.

on other royal implications in the text. From the perspective of the royal ideal, the lists would have a hierarchical connotation, particularly concerning the highest authority in the Yehud community. In this light we note also how the final oracle deliberately addresses Zerubbabel without any mention of Joshua or the people (Hag 2:21).²⁵⁹ Thus, although the priesthood may have been on par sociologically with the monarchy as Meyers and Meyers suggest, ideologically there is a sense of support for the institution of the monarchy over priesthood and the people. What does this then say about the person of Zerubbabel? After establishing the yearning for a king, the text of Haggai also goes as far as to point to Zerubbabel as that potential fulfilment of that role. Further evidence supports this conclusion.²⁶⁰

At this point we continue to point out other signs of royal ideology within the rest of the Haggai text. First, the use of the word פֶּנֶל “panel” in v.4 to describe the condition of the people’s houses has a royal tone to it, as the very same word is used in connection to architectural features involved in the rebuilding of temples (1 Kgs 6:9) and royal palaces (1 Kgs 7:3, 7; Jer 22:14). Second, the theme of temple rebuilding is also closely associated with kingship. It is stated that kings were responsible for the building and maintenance of temples in the ancient Near Eastern world. Furthermore, in temple-building stories it was a common starting point of the narrative that the deity commanded a king to build the temple, alternatively it was the king seeking the deity’s permission.²⁶¹ This role of temple-builders initially carried out in the time of David and

²⁵⁹ Wolff argues that within the Persian Administrative system, Zerubbabel being designated the “governor of Judah” indicates he was the chief administrative officer in Yehud. Wolff, *Haggai*, 39.

²⁶⁰ Bowick, “Characters in Stone: Royal Ideology and Yehudite Identity in the Behistun Inscription and the Book of Haggai,” 108.

²⁶¹ William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles*, JSOTSup 160 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 37. See also Bowick, “Characters in Stone: Royal Ideology and Yehudite Identity in the Behistun Inscription and the Book of Haggai,” 109-110.

Solomon, became associated with the Davidic dynasty. In this light, as temple-rebuilding is the main thrust of Haggai's messages; we can therefore presume the existence of a royal undertone which functions indirectly like a thread throughout the entire book.

Upon saying this, it would also be fair to conclude that this ideologeme is not the dominant one, as it is overridden by other prominent issues demanding attention, i.e. the narrative itself focuses on the theme of rebuilding the temple under foreign authority. The royal ideology is not as clear in the text as the main theme, but it is something that can be drawn out by hermeneutical exercises as is evident in our analysis of royal related elements that appear sporadically in the text.

1.2. Imperialism

At this point, it must be pointed out that the relationship between royal and imperial ideologies is not all conflict and contrasts, as at the same time we are to expect overlapping elements. Roberts discusses the development of an imperial ideology that not only appears to have emerged during king David's reign, but continued to remain an essential feature of Jerusalem royal ideology. In Roberts' analysis, the importance of public opinion and how it shapes the actions of the leading group is highlighted thus, an element of royal ideology served to justify the need for a king in Israel. *Yahweh* is the king of Israel and the earthly monarch is chosen to represent *Yahweh* before the people. Furthermore, protecting and regaining of lands traditionally claimed by the people was a major contributor to the general approval towards the institution of the monarch. David's expansionist regime would have required justification and, according to

Roberts, the elevation of *Yahweh's* status from the local deity of Israel to the supreme God of the whole world was a major element of the explanation.²⁶²

Two main points may be drawn from this discussion by Roberts. First, there is the impact such an ideology had on foreign policy, i.e. from a very exclusive perception to a more inclusive. Roberts correctly references Isaiah's encouragement to Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah to adopt foreign policy. All this was based on the belief that *Yahweh* was the imperial god and that *Yahweh's* promise to the Davidic dynasty was unchangeable.²⁶³ As we shall see, this position has great significance on our understanding of the relationship between the Yehud community and the kings of Persia. The second point is the fact that whilst the expansionist programme carries imperial connotations, it remains an element of the local royal ideology.²⁶⁴ In this light, whereas royal ideology commences at a local level and focusses directly on the traditionally claimed territories, that focus then develops to a wider framework not only geographically but in all spheres, i.e. socially, politically, economically, and religiously. *Yahweh* now had imperial status and the covenant with David confirmed the king's status as *Yahweh's* chosen leader, and Jerusalem as the chosen city.²⁶⁵ Note that despite the imperial associations the understanding is that the foreigner's involvement was

²⁶² J. J. M. Roberts, "Public Opinion, Royal Apologetics, and Imperial Ideology: A Political Analysis of the Portrait of David - A Man after God's own Heart" in *Theology Today* 69/2 (2012), 116-132.

²⁶³ Roberts, "Public Opinion, Royal Apologetics, and Imperial Ideology:" 130-132.

²⁶⁴ Roberts, "Public Opinion, Royal Apologetics, and Imperial Ideology:" 131.

²⁶⁵ Problematic at this point would be the notion that the kingdom of Israel during Solomon's reign does not quite turn out to be as extravagant as it is described – i.e. from an archaeological perspective – which in the process may even question the true extent of David's kingdom. However, as we are concerned with the ideologies and imperial mindset, the historical reality will not be treated here. What is important for our discussion is the expansionist ideal which comes through the text. Neil Silberman and Israel Finkelstein, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 20.

merely for the benefit of the local community. So, as we move along in this brief discussion, such overlaps shall be acknowledged.

As we now reset our focus on the implications of imperialism, the most obvious starting point is the mention of the Persian monarch, Darius, in the chronological reference in the superscription (Hag 1:1).²⁶⁶ The importance of this reference cannot be taken lightly for not only is it a projection of the potential dominance of imperialism within the text, but it overlaps with the less perceptible royal ideology. In support of the former, the reference points beyond the text to the historical, social, economic and political settings. It references the kings who are in power at a certain period; thus, in the Haggai narrative, it is quite clear that the utmost authority is the imperial king. On the other hand, I agree with Meyers and Meyers that the mentioning alone – of Darius – in the texts of Haggai and Zechariah also reflects a common reception of the legitimacy of the Persian rule,²⁶⁷ an acceptance which I believe has a great deal to do with the evolved Jerusalem royal ideology discussed above.

Another key imperial representation in the text is the use of the title “governor” (Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21). To fully comprehend the concrete nature of the office in the time of Zerubbabel remains an intricate assignment as there is no compromise – in light of royal ideology (see above) – pertaining to the role, authority and geographical extent of that authority.²⁶⁸ While we have already established how the title has a royal nuance

²⁶⁶ See also Hag 2:1, 10.

²⁶⁷ Carol Meyers and Eric Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible Series. (New York / London / Toronto / Sydney / Auckland: Doubleday, 1987), 5-6.

²⁶⁸ There is an ongoing debate to the actual offices held by Zerubbabel but also his predecessor Sheshbazzar. The ambiguous nature of the title *pehah* which was given to Sheshbazzar in particular (as argued by Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, p.280.) makes it impossible to determine what place he had in the Persian administration, that is, whether he was a governor or prefect. Obviously, Soggins differentiates between the two in terms of the different powers

and, on one hand, serves to support Zerubbabel's kingly status, our intention here is to reemphasize the obvious imperial sense, as it is used to express Zerubbabel's administrative position within the Persian empire. One point which can contribute towards the imperial emphasis is that the word מְלִיכָא "governor" is a loan-word from the Assyrian "pahati" meaning "lord of a district." The word מְלִיכָא does not appear in pre-exilic literature but comes into use during the exile and post-exilic period.²⁶⁹

At this point we now draw our attention to the dual interests of the temple which is at the very core of Haggai's messages. While there is sense of nostalgia towards the pre-exilic temple (Hag 2:3), the current structure is not necessarily a carbon copy with the same emphasis and interests. From a literary analysis, Clines concludes that the temple as constructed by the text of Haggai is simply a treasure house.²⁷⁰ This would fall in very well with imperialistic purposes especially taking into consideration the main function of the temple. The restoration of various temples of diverse imperial subjects was part of the imperial struggle for social and political control of the Persian empire. At first the majority of the funding of the temple projects came from the imperial pockets.²⁷¹ Given this fact, it would be very likely that the Persians had great influence in the shaping as well as the structuring of the temples.

held by each office. However, for this study, the debate would be irrelevant due to the inescapable fact that Sheshbazzar remained a Persian appointee.

²⁶⁹ "מְלִיכָא" in *BDB*, 808.

²⁷⁰ David A. Clines, "Haggai's Temple, Constructed, Deconstructed and Reconstructed." In *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament: An International Journal of Nordic Theology*. Vol. 7, Issue 1 (1993): 51 – 77.

²⁷¹ Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah" *Second Temple Studies* 1, ed. Phillip R. Davies (Sheffield: JSOT Press/Sheffield Academic Press, 1991):51.

Second, the funding for maintenance of these temples depended on the importance of the province within the imperial objectives.²⁷² Within this line of reasoning, Judah may have been on the receiving end of substantial amounts of financing, considering that it was intended as a military outpost for campaigns against Egypt.²⁷³ Both points of influence demonstrate the imperial view of the temples as Balentine proposes, they were to function as “administrative centres”²⁷⁴ which would monitor and control the activities and operations of the province on the one hand, while, on the other assist in the generating of wealth for imperial interests.

On a more linguistic front, Hebrew language – just like any language – has a history of development and evolution. Although this history cannot be discussed extensively in this work, I do wish to focus on the specific eras that have bearing on the text of Haggai, i.e. pre-exilic and post-exilic Judah, with their correspond language forms as standard biblical Hebrew (henceforth *SBH*) and late biblical Hebrew (henceforth *LBH*).²⁷⁵ While the former is roughly dated from the eighth to the sixth century BCE, the latter is usually dated from after the Babylonian exile in 587 BCE. It is during the Persian era when many of the changes occurred and are mainly attributed to the influence of Aramaic language and culture.²⁷⁶ Such influence not only is evident in the text of Haggai, but it also represents the imperial ideal that has been inscribed in the text.

²⁷² Balentine, “The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period,” 141.

²⁷³ Lester Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 143.

²⁷⁴ Balentine, “The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period,” 141.

²⁷⁵ Avi Hurvitz, *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 1. See also Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language*. (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52. Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 330.

²⁷⁶ According to Hurvitz, there appears to be four contributing factors to the development of Biblical Hebrew; i.e. the use of Persian loanwords, Aramaic influence, the succession of Rabbinic Hebrew and inner developments within Biblical Hebrew itself. The major player of the four is Aramaic influence.

To commence this section, although the word *if* (Hag 2:12) occurs elsewhere in the biblical text (Lev 25:20; Jer 2:10, 3:1; Prov 11:31; 2 Chr 7:13), the occurrences in texts of the Persian period are attributed solely to Aramaic influence i.e. Hag 2:12 and 2 Chr 7:13.

Another word considered to be of Aramaic influence is עוד *“still, yet, until, while”* Haggai 2:19:

הָעוֹד הַזֶּה בְּמִגּוּרָה וְעַד־הַגֶּפֶן וְהַתְּאֵנָה וְהַרְמִיּוֹן וְעֵץ הַזַּיִת לֹא נִשְׂא מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֶבְרָךְ

Is the seed still in the storehouse? And still the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate and the olive tree do not carry (fruit). From this day, I will bless (you).

For Rendsburg, *SBH* retains a distinction between עד *“until”* and עוד *“still, while,”* whereas the Aramaic employs only the latter to uphold the wide range of meanings (Jon 4:2; Job 1:8; Neh 7:3).²⁷⁷

We now take note of the process of substantivization which is evident in the form הַרְבֵּה *“great, much”* in the following verses. Substantivization is the process where an adverb/adjective changes to become a noun.

Hag 1:6

וְרַעְתֶּם הַרְבֵּה וְהִבֵּא מְעֻט

...you have sown much and bring in little...

Hag 1:9

פָּנָה אֶל־הַרְבֵּה וְהִנֵּה לְמְעֻט

Hurvitz, *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period*, 1-10.

²⁷⁷ Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 330 - 331.

...you have looked for much and/but behold to a little...

In both texts, the word now carries the connotation of a “great amount or quantity.” In *SBH* the more preferred form used to express great amounts are רַב or רָב (Gen 30:30; Lev 25:16; Num 13:18, 26:54, 56; 33:54; 35:8; Deut 28:62; 1 Sam 14:6; Prov 16:8). As a feature of *LBH*, the word הַרְבֵּה occurs also in other post-exilic texts (Jon 4:11; Qoh 5:16; Neh 5:18, 2 Chr 25:9).²⁷⁸

Further, the employment of the root עָמַד “stand” in Hag 2:5 is – for Rendsburg – not only very common in *LBH*,²⁷⁹ but is also perceived to be of Aramaic influence. It is this influence where the root עָמַד appears to have developed and expanded in meanings and in *LBH* covers nuances represented by the root קָוַם “arise.” This is illustrated with the comparison of the Haggai occurrence with the *SBH* usage in Josh 2:11.

Next, we take note of the word מְלָאכָוִית “message” (of God) in Hag 1:13. Although its *hapax legomenon*²⁸⁰ status may threaten any realistic contribution it may make to our argument, it is still noteworthy. It is however the suffix -וִית which draws our attention as it is believed to be a common feature of not only *LBH*, but also in later stages of the Hebrew language. The verdict is that מְלָאכָוִית may have emerged in resemblance of the noun מְלָאָךְ “messenger” (of God) during the early Persian era.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 331-332.

²⁷⁹ Rendsburg deals with data from the works of Francis Andersen and Dean Forbes which show how the root עָמַד is more popular in *LBH* texts than *SBH*. Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 333.

²⁸⁰ This is the only occurrence of this word in the bible and may not be worthy of a discussion or qualify any trend in the *LBH* era, however, it is the suffix which is the late development and the focus of the discussion.

²⁸¹ Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 333.

We now turn our attention to the phrase “rousing of one’s spirit” in Hag 1:14.

וַיָּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ זְרֻבָּבֶל בֶּן־שִׁלְתַּיָּאל פֶּתַח יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־רוּחַ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן
הַגָּדוֹל וְאֶת־רוּחַ כָּל שְׁאֲרֵית הָעָם וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ מִלְאָכָה בְּבֵית־יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

And *Yahweh* roused the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest and the spirit of all the remnant of the people and they came and they (did) the work (in) the Lord of Host, their God.

Apart from Haggai, the idea can only be found in Jer 51:1; Ezra 1:1, 5; 1 Chr 5:26; 2 Chr 21:16, 36:22. The importance of this phrase is highlighted even more when considering earlier temple-building accounts where such statements do not occur. Another example which may assist further to clarify our point is the comparison of certain words from the books of Kings and Chronicles. In 2 Kgs 15:19, 29; 17:6, 18:11, we read that the kings of Assyria simply move in and carry the Israelites into exile. In 1 Chr 5:26, on the other hand, it is clearly *Yahweh* who “roused the spirits” of the Assyrian kings into action.²⁸² In saying that, the point is to present this phrase as a feature of LBH and its contribution towards the imperial ideal.

Other phrases from Haggai which may also be categorized as *LBH* features are as follows. Two times we come across יהוה היכל “*the temple of Yahweh*” (Hag 2:15, 18); although it occurs in *SBH* it does so only three times (1 Sam 1:9; 3:3; 2 Kgs 18:16). From the sixth century onwards – which is considered the transitional point from *SBH* to *LBH* - the phrase becomes more common and is used nineteen times (2 Kgs 23:4; 24:13; Jer 7:4 [3x]; 24:1; Ezek 8:16 [2x]; Hag 2:15, 18; Zech 6:12, 13, 14, 15; Ezra 3:6, 10; 2 Chr 26:16; 27:2; 29:16). Another commonly used *LBH* phrase is כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת “*thus says Yahweh of Hosts*” in comparison with *SBH*’s more simplified and preferred phrase

²⁸² Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 333 - 334.

of אָמַר יְהוָה (כֹּה) “(thus) says Yahweh.” While the phrase occurs only twice in *SBH* (1 Sam 15:2; 2 Sam 7:8) it is used heavily in the book of Jeremiah (51x) and more importantly in the three prophets of the Persian era, i.e. Haggai (5x with “thus”, 2x without), Zechariah (17x with “thus”, 4x without), and Malachi (1x with “thus”, 20x without).

From a syntactical point of view, it is also interesting to take note of the shift in the ordering of the word הַמֶּלֶךְ “the king” and the proper noun which it qualifies. While in *SBH* the noun precedes the title, the *LBH* version sees the noun come first and although this categorizing is not always the case in *SBH* and *LBH* texts, the *LBH* phrase eventually becomes the “characteristic mark” of the compositions of the Persian era. This structure as seen in Hag 1:1: לְדָרְיֹוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ “Darius the king” is not only representation of *LBH* but also believed to reflect Aramaic influence.²⁸³

At a linguistic level, with *LBH*, we have revealed a strong presence of imperial-related features in the text. At a very basic level, the first-time reader would more likely to be engaged and feel the presence of an imperial ideal over the royal ideology, and I believe that our brief analysis of the two ideals in the text of Haggai also moves towards confirming this. As already noted, the mentioning of Darius as the king portrayed historical truths as to the current authority at the time; furthermore, it lays the platform for the dominating presence the imperial ideology will have in the text. The discussions concerning the office of governor and the institution of the temple and their functions in light of the empire’s interests consolidate the imperial dominance in the text. Finally, the language also attests to the imperial era during the Persian rule, as it displays a strong

²⁸³ Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 335.

presence of *LBH* features and Aramaic influences. Upon saying that, we may also take note of the overlapping nature of the texts and the various perspectives they can serve. This is important as it can have great bearing on the proposed resolutions in the text.

1.3. Familial Ideal

Before we move to the next phase of the second horizon, we present a brief but noteworthy discussion on a possible third ideologeme representing a third player in the conflict and tension. Despite this very brief acknowledgement when aligned against evidence discussed of the previous ideologemes, they are by no means less significant as they are a representation of a certain group or groups whose ideals are either fading with their past or are just struggling to compete with the main ideals of society at the time.

We acknowledge the presence of features in the text that portrays a more family-centred ideal; thus our focus is on the people in general who appears to be the most passive²⁸⁴ of all groups mentioned in the text. First, there is a contrast drawn between *Yahweh's* house and that of the people (Hag 1:2-4, 9) where the people's priority is with their own houses. Indirectly, this signifies prioritizing of family over any national or religious institutions.²⁸⁵ Second, despite this being the norm, the more domestic or rather basic concept of בֵּית *"house"* is preferred over the more royal or elite הֵיכָל *"temple"* to refer to *Yahweh's* building: the former occurring 12 times (Hag 1:2, 3[2x], 8, 9[3x], 14; 2:3, 7, 9) compared to the latter's two appearances (Hag 2:15, 18).

²⁸⁴ See Petersen's discussion on v.2 where there is also an implication of the passive role the people have in the text. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 47-48.

²⁸⁵ This emphasis on family is also evident in Redditt's discussion of the concept "panelled houses" in v.3. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 18-19.

Third, there is the strong presence of not only the agricultural vernacular²⁸⁶ but references which – in support of the first two points – shines some light on the socio-economic life of the people. Despite the struggles and the negative outcomes reported in the text of their labours, once again the people’s work and priority appears to lie within caring for their families (Hag 1:6, 9-12). Furthermore, from a religious perspective, the people appear to uphold their religious obligations in Hag 2:14. At this point we encounter the discussion on clean and the unclean but focus from the people’s perspective; after all, judgement of their actions and offerings is reserved mainly for *Yahweh* alone. Moreover, the text does not exactly note the type of offering but appears to refer to a whole range of offerings²⁸⁷ which are made at the temple. Our current concern, however, is with an element most offerings have in common, i.e. to appease and maintain a good relationship with *Yahweh*. Even considering the word קָרַב “*come near, approach*”²⁸⁸ – commonly referred to as priestly language²⁸⁹ – can be seen as literally indicating such an ideal. It is about coming before or approaching *Yahweh* and in the process, as mentioned above, maintain a favourable relationship with *Yahweh*. On a more technical note, the *hiphil* form of the verb – considering that the people are the object – indicates that the people are caused²⁹⁰ into making these offerings. Upon saying that, discussion for a cause can vary immensely, however, I want to exploit the notion of

²⁸⁶ The agricultural language shall feature more in detail in the economic discussion of the final phase in chapter four.

²⁸⁷ See the following references for an example of the various Jewish sacrifices and offerings. Burnt offering (Lev 1, Lev 6:8-13); Grain offering (Lev 2, Lev 6:14-23); Sacrifice of well-being/fellowship offering (Lev 3, Lev 7:11-35); Sin/purification offering (Lev 4:1-5:13, Lev 6:24-30); Guilt offering (Lev 5:14-6:7, Lev 7:1-10).

²⁸⁸ קָרַב in *BDB*, 897.

²⁸⁹ The word קָרַב in *hiphil* form is a common feature of the books of Leviticus and Numbers. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 57-58. Wolff, *Haggai*, 94.

²⁹⁰ Arthur Walker-Jones, *Hebrew for Biblical Interpretation*, SBL, ed. Steven L McKenzie (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 116.

the importance of the family unit and the intertwined relationship with religious responsibilities; i.e. religious responsibilities and appeasing *Yahweh* eventually translates into blessings and prosperity for the family. This would be a norm as throughout Israelite history, obedience was very central to the people's covenant with *Yahweh*.²⁹¹ So, whilst the people may have been fulfilling their religious obligations, it is without a doubt that they also had the well-being of their families as the driving cause.

In summary, we have discussed representative units of the respective ideologies in the text known as ideologemes and we have identified three in the book of Haggai; i.e. the royal, imperial and familial ideal.

2. Interpretation

Search for contradiction (moving from ideological to class conflict). Also seeks the ways people relate to the totality: uses psychoanalysis and national allegory.²⁹²

The purpose of identifying contradictory ideological messages is that they point beyond themselves to the class struggles which generated them in the first place.²⁹³

Due to the closely related nature between this section and the social discussion of the next, the two sections could easily have been merged, however, we will still maintain this interpretive discussion – despite being very brief – in the attempt to

²⁹¹ *Yahweh's covenant with the people of Israel mirrors treaties of the Ancient Near East; in particular the Assyrian suzerain-vassal treaty. In this treaty, the dominant side, the suzerain king offers certain conditions to the loyal smaller side, the vassal. A vassal would agree to the terms of the suzerain in return for the suzerain's protection from enemies. Peter C. Craigie provides a brief explanation of these treaties and Israel's adaptation on p.23. —Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 22-24. See also J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 17-21.*

²⁹² Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

²⁹³ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 69.

acknowledge sections of Jameson's methodology made clear in the work of Boer.²⁹⁴ We have identified ideologemes which not only contradict and remain in tension with one another, but at times also show glimpses of a special union between them. Our task at this point is to discuss the conflicting ideological messages that each ideologeme represents in the text. Although we may have already touched on the respective interests in the earlier discussions, we shall reiterate these ideological concerns with relation to the temple, which is very central to the text.

2.1. Royal Temple

First, the presence of a consistent royal undertone is evidence enough to suggest the probable existence of a yearning and expectation towards the re-establishment of the institution of the monarchy in Yehud. The focus on Zerubbabel as the climax to the book can function as further emphasis of this yearning, with a specific representation of the Davidic covenant with *Yahweh*.²⁹⁵ The question at this stage is: how would the institution of the temple affect these royal ambitions? Would it be favoured or rejected?

Haggai would have been eager to rebuild the temple as it is the will of *Yahweh*. Ideologically it would also serve him well due to the close relationship the temple has always had with the monarch. The question is regarding Zerubbabel and Joshua and where they stand, especially within the greater context of the Persian interests with the temple. Would they also have a reason to cause delay to the rebuilding of the temple? This is a question that may be discussed later. What can be assumed at this point is the importance of the temple for the local leaders, not only as the cultic but also as the

²⁹⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

²⁹⁵ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 17.

administrative centre. In the context of local Yehud, the temple serves not only the office of the High priest and priesthood, but it also serves well in the capacity as the government centre.²⁹⁶

So it is obvious that the temple would have been endorsed also by this group with a royal agenda as it initiates a process which would include the continuation of the monarchy.

2.2. State Temple

Second, asking the same question of “for or against” the temple institution, we look to articulate a possible answer from an imperial perspective. From a historical point of view, it is quite clear that the kings of Persia did favour the rebuilding of temples within the empire, in fact seeing themselves as divinely appointed to carry out such tasks (2 Chr 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). Not only did Cyrus issue an edict permitting his subjects to return to their homelands – including the Jews – but he also commanded and contributed funds to the rebuilding of the various temples. We must note that apart from the occurrences in the Bible, no other evidence of this specific edict has been found. However, there is the Cyrus Cylinder, which has a more general policy along a similar line.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Bowick, “Characters in Stone: Royal Ideology and Yehudite Identity in the Behistun Inscription and the Book of Haggai,” 108.

²⁹⁷ The debate continues as to the true nature of the relationship between Yehud and the Persian empire. On the one hand, the Persian rulers were perceived as commanding the restoration of cultic sites such as temples. On the other hand, the Persian rulers had no real specific interest in Yehud and the general policy allowed for any of the empire’s subjects to return and re-establish their temples. In this case, the initiative lay with people of Yehud. Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah*, Vol. 1, (London/New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 355.

In addition, tradition also accounts for the king's decree of returning the vessels that had been looted from the temple during its destruction in 586 B.C.E. (Ezra 6:3-5).²⁹⁸ So the answer is yes, according to the biblical text the imperial mindset of the time definitely endorsed the temples most probably for the following reasons. While the Jerusalem temple of the post-exilic era may have continued various ideals of the pre-exilic Solomon temple, it did so in a very different manner. As the "central sanctuary," its centrality differed very much from the reforms of Josiah. It was to be central only within its "spiritual function," that is, the Jews in dispersion continued to refer to the Jerusalem temple for guidance and direction only, as they now maintained their own temples within their respective locations.²⁹⁹ This notion of the temple centrality and its functions would also prove beneficial from an imperial perspective. Balentine makes note of the temple's function as the "religious centre." The opportunity for the imperial rule to "shape the ritual world" in line with its interests opened up. Part of this influence is evident in the inclusion of prayers for the imperial king and the Empire as part of the local liturgies (Ezra 6:10).³⁰⁰

Probably the most important function of the temple to the Persian rulers would be its contribution to the imperial economy. Both Weinberg and Balentine argue that this was the temple's primary function; to serve the socio-economic interests of the imperial rule, a place from which the province was administered as well as a place for

²⁹⁸ Gosta W. Ahlstrom, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, ed. Diana Edelman (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 814-817.

²⁹⁹ Samaritan leadership has indicated the centrality of the Jerusalem Temple when they offered to assist on the basis that they also worship Yahweh (Ezra.4:2-3). The Jews in Elephantine are also reported to have sought the support for rebuilding of their temple with Samaria and Judah; the fact that they first sought word from Jerusalem through a letter implies the leading role of the Jerusalem Temple. Furthermore, this Jewish community in Egypt continued to seek directions from Jerusalem regarding doctrinal and liturgical matters. — Rainer Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel: An Introduction*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 143-145.

³⁰⁰ Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period," 141-142.

the collection and redistribution of taxes.³⁰¹ Clines' argued that the temple was merely portrayed as a "treasure house" in Haggai.³⁰² Stevens' study—of the economic dimension of the temples of the Persian period—lists the sources of income as well as expenses of the daily operations. Income was obtained through land ownership, tithes, taxes, gifts and trade, while expenses were for maintaining temple personnel, taxes, royal provisioning, appropriations and the welfare of the community.³⁰³ According to Kessler, theologically, the exilic experience of the people had elevated the importance of the post-exilic temple, which unfortunately in economic terms, brought heavier financial burdens to the people than the first temple.³⁰⁴ The Second temple maintained its characteristic as a "state sanctuary," however, the influence of the Persians on the operations of the temple would then suggest that it had become a "Persian State sanctuary."³⁰⁵ So it is highly probable that the temple played a very central role in imperial interests. Thus we are set up very nicely to discuss – in the next section – which of the Yehud locals exactly represented these ideals.

³⁰¹ Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 126. See also Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period," 141-142. Carol L. Meyers, J. Blenkinsopp, John W. Wright perceives the economic activities of the Temple as analogous to the modern "bank."—Meyers, "Temple, Jerusalem," *ABD* 6, 350-369. Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah," 23. Wright, "Guarding the Gates: 1 Chronicles 26.1-19 and the Roles of Gatekeepers in Chronicles," *JSOT* 48 (1990): 76.

³⁰² Clines, "Haggai's Temple, Constructed, Deconstructed and Reconstructed." 51 – 77.

³⁰³ Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006), 82-135.

³⁰⁴ Kessler alludes to the people's reflecting on the exilic experience as the cause of this elevated perception of the Temple. This has two indications: first, the people have lived the best part of a century yearning for a return to Jerusalem and the Temple, which for them symbolized Yahweh's presence amongst His people. Thus, the great importance of the Second Temple to the returnees. Second, it identified them as the people of Yahweh giving them a religious uniqueness. In the context of the diaspora, the Temple gave the dispersed Jewish communities the sense of togetherness under the worship of Yahweh.— Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 145-146.

³⁰⁵ Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 146.

2.3. Family Temple

Last we pose the “for and against” question in relation to the family ideal. If one phrase sums up the attitude of families towards the temple; it would be the accusation brought against them in Hag 1:2.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר הָעַם הַזֶּה אָמְרוּ לֹא עַת־בָּא עַת־בֵּית יְהוָה לְהִבְנוֹת: פ

Thus says the Lord of Hosts saying; this people say the time has not come, the time of the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.

It is evident that the people do not reject the institution of the temple but rather that it is more a matter of timing that determines their response. Given their miserable economic situation (as the text alludes), the people may well have thought that they were not in a good position to rebuild; in other words, they probably could not afford to waste any small resources they may have had to keep their families for the temple.³⁰⁶ To restate the point regarding family priorities: the right time here appears to be dependent on the family's economic situation. While others may have suggested “time” here referring to a fulfilment of prophecy³⁰⁷ and that the time has arrived to put the temple before all personal agendas, it is very hard to ignore the idea that in the eyes of the people, the time is only right when they feel their families well-being is not under any threat, be it from religious and economic factors or even social and political threats.³⁰⁸ The next section will aim to provide a more concrete picture of possible groups represented by these ideals.

³⁰⁶ Wollf, *Haggai*, 40-41. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 18-19. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 20-21.

³⁰⁷ Wollf, *Haggai*, 40-41.

³⁰⁸ Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 249.

3. Base

Social class and conflict between ruled and ruling classes.³⁰⁹

After identifying certain ideologemes and possible interpretations of their relations with the text's central focus, we now move to associate these findings with the subject of social class. Social class plays a major role in Marx's social theory and, despite its close affiliation with the modes of production, we will try to leave the latter to be discussed in its proposed place i.e. in the third horizon. Methodologically, this discussion on social class shall commence with Marx's polarized³¹⁰ "conflict theory" – a ruling class and the lower ruled class – and move further with Weber's development of stratification theory. While "class" in Marx's perspective describes a group of people who have the same purpose in the economic order or organization of production, Weber's contribution suggests that class was not the only basis of forming social groups with common interests; i.e. the ownership of property, commercial elements, and status.³¹¹

3.1. The Ruling Discourse

Continuing on from Marx's conflict theory, Jameson moves into the discussion of class discourse by adapting Bakhtin's understanding that such class discourses in the text are dialogical. Like Marx, Jameson perceives the discourse to be "antagonistic" in nature; i.e. a dialogue of class struggle. On the one hand, the ruling class seeks ways to "legitimize" its power and privileged status, on the other the opposition seek out

³⁰⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

³¹⁰ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 83-84.

³¹¹ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An outline of interpretive sociology*, (eds.) Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press, 1978), 302 – 307.

strategies and ways to undermine the existing system.³¹² Taking into consideration the analysis so far, we have at a formal level the tension between the poetic and prose features. Once again I wish to point out that although the prose elements may literally be in a minority, its dominating influence does come through in its use of poetic features in storytelling and narratives. From a redactional perspective, Gottwald sees the various layers as clearly uncovering and defining social conflict.³¹³

We shall now consider noticeable strategies from the text that function to legitimize the dominant position of the ruling class within society. Such discourses usually portray negative images with relation to the opposition. While other negative portraits will be discussed, we will commence with the main contradiction of “honor” and “not-honor” as identified in the previous chapter. In determining the one from the other, the temple in the narrative functions as a measuring rod, or rather criterion. Note the very simple and exposing nature of the classification within the story i.e. if one is not committed to the temple, one is considered to have no honor. While the focus is on those who disassociate themselves from the work of the temple, indirectly, the rightful position promoted in the text is affiliation with the temple. This presumably is the position of the ruling class as the temple is the source of material wealth as emphasized in the text.

Other notable negativities towards the opposing discourse is the use of the word טמא “unclean,” (Hag 2:10-14); the imagery of the socio-economic failure as a result of delaying the work on the temple (Hag 1:5-6, 9-11); the encouraging words בָּנֵה “be

³¹² Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 84.

³¹³ Norman K. Gottwald, “Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies” in *JBL* 112/1 (1993), 15.

strong,” אֶל־תִּירָאוּ “do not fear,” which are spoken to the people have an indirect effect. To what degree this would fully represent the state of the opposition, it is not as relevant as the point that within the perception of the ruling discourse the opposition is undesirably weak and afraid. In addition, the necessity of the reassurance of *Yahweh*’s presence כִּי־אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם “...that I am with you...” (Hag 2:4) further taints the image of the opposition as being sceptical and lacking trust in *Yahweh*. Finally, the concept of obedience which is very central in the life of an Israelite surfaces (Hag 1:12), suggesting disobedience on behalf of opposition to temple. From a dichotomous position, all this works in favour of the ruling class, i.e. they are the honored and have honor, as they are associated with the temple. In addition, they are indirectly portrayed to be clean and purified, obedient, strong and brave and require no reassurance of *Yahweh*’s presence. Importantly, this element of ruling discourse also has strong priestly flavour in terms of the language.

To recap the ideologemes and what they possibly represent: the royal and imperial can easily be classified as part of the ruling element in the hostile dialogue. The familial unit on the other hand, whilst it may appear at first to represent the opposing discourse – that of the exploited – does not necessarily confirm that it is a genuine manifestation of this exploited class within the text. This is where the importance of Weber’s theory comes into play, as it brings into the conversation the notion of “factions” within a single class, i.e. groups of different status can be present within a single class.³¹⁴ Thus, the familial unit can merely represent a faction of the leading or ruling class, who for some reason appear to sympathize with the family concerns which

³¹⁴ Weber, *Economy and Society: An outline of interpretive sociology*, 302 – 307.

in the text is the main concern of the people. The ruling discourse promotes heavily Persian interests, not only the emphasis of the temple and its functions, the urge for the entire community to associate with or rather prioritize the temple.

At this point I wish to bring in the sociological discussions of Gottwald, which I believe will shed light on the possible groups in tension. For Gottwald, the *“golah”* the returnees from exile consisted mostly of the pre-exilic elite who were carried into captivity. From a theological stance, this group believed that the exilic experience may have purified them of their sins; in addition, they believed it to be their mission to rule Judah once again, to restore and rebuild it, following closely the law of *Yahweh*.³¹⁵ The problem however is that over time, the returnees had now become loyal to the empire, in part since they may have seen it as *Yahweh’s* divine plan,³¹⁶ and in part since their leadership practices and ideals will have also been tainted with the imperial ways and practices. In light of the ruling class and social conflict, the returnees’ imperial-centred way of leadership appeared to have become oppressive to the people - who Gottwald identifies as those who remained in Judah during the exile – which will be discussed later. Thus, the rise of strata within the ruling class as ignorance to the needs and feelings of the subject class was considered unhealthy if the ruling class wished to maintain their honored positions within the Yehud hierarchy. For Gottwald, although Nehemiah arrived at a much later time, he was a classic example of this critique from within the ruling class itself.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Gottwald, “Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagletonian Reading,” in *Semeia*, 52-55.

³¹⁶ We have also touched on the use of the epithet “my servant” for Zerubbabel (Hag 2:23), but note that it is undermined by a possible idea that the Persian kings were servants of the imperial *Yahweh*, carrying out his will.

³¹⁷ Gottwald, “Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies,” 16-17.

We shall look further into the ruling class at a later stage, but for now we must take a necessary detour to gather an understanding of Persian imperial interests with their subjects – with special focus on the community in Yehud – as it will then be much easier to understand its influence on the ideals of the various social classes – both the ruling and ruled – in Yehud.

3.2. The Persian Empire

From a historical standpoint, the Babylonian rule – which was responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and taking its citizens into exile – fell rapidly after the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BCE.³¹⁸ The end of Babylonia came in no great battle when in 539 BCE, Gobryas—the Persian general—took the city of Babylonia without a fight. Cyrus who arrived two weeks later was now in control of what was formerly referred to as the Neo-Babylonian Empire.³¹⁹

Cyrus' rule is generally considered liberal and was characterized by a policy of toleration. He is believed to have treated the people generously and shown a degree of respect for the traditions and beliefs of the multi-cultural subjects formerly under Babylonian rule but now under Persian rule. He encouraged the restoration of the

³¹⁸ Weakened by internal divisions and threatened by ambitious neighbours its leaders could not hold the empire together. After a rapid succession of rulers marked by assassinations and conspiracies, Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king came to power in 556 BCE. Nabonidus' rule brought about divisions within the empire that would become fatal, especially with his religious preferences. His obsession with the worship of the moon god Sin saw the attempt to establish Sin as the chief deity of Babylon. This invited a solid contingent of opposition from the priesthood who maintained loyalty to Marduk the true deity of Babylonia. —Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 273-276. Gottwald, "Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagleonian Reading," in *Semeia*, 47.

³¹⁹ Cyrus the Persian had managed to unify warring tribes and by 550 B.C.E. conquered the Median Empire. With the Medes and Persians now united, Cyrus launched an ambitious and successful campaign to expand his territory to the east, while at the same time anticipating the opportune time for the assault on the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (London: SCM Press Limited, 1992), 122-123.

worship of Marduk,³²⁰ restoring the idols to their rightful places.³²¹ Following his policy of allowing a great deal of freedom among conquered peoples, Cyrus issued the edict for his subjects to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples (Ezra 1:1-4).³²²

The first set of exiles who returned to Judah are believed to have been under the leadership of Sheshbazzar—a Prince of Judah (Ezra 1:8, 11 5:14, 16) and perhaps a son of Jehoiachin who had been taken captive to Babylon (cf. 1 Chr. 3:18). Tradition has it that Sheshbazzar was commissioned by the imperial rulers to restore the sacred vessels as per the edict. He was given some authority over the territory and proceeded to lay the foundations for the rebuilding of the Temple. Although other traditions such as portrayed in Ezra 3:6-11 credit Zerubbabel for beginning to lay the foundations, there is a general consensus that Zerubbabel concluded what Sheshbazzar started.³²³ We must take note that Jewish communities were at this point of history dispersed throughout the Ancient Near East, that is, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Babylonia now under Persia and also the community in Judah.³²⁴

The re-construction of the social structures and life of the Judean communities during the Second Temple period has been no easy task over the years, primarily due to

³²⁰ Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, second edition, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 302.

³²¹ David Hinson reports that Cyrus' loyalty to the deity Marduk is also considered to have played a major role in his ascension to power. In the eyes of the Babylonians who still had not recovered from Nabonidus' devaluing acts against their god, Cyrus' restoring of the local religion earned him the designations of the 'great hero' and 'servant of Marduk' and thus he was welcomed accordingly by the people of Babylonia. In showing this loyalty, Cyrus' had restored all the idols to the traditional shrines and even participated in its festivals. Hinson, *History of Israel: Old Testament Introduction 1* (London, SPCK, 1973), 161.

³²² Gosta W. Ahlstrom, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, ed. Diana Edelman (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 814-817.

³²³ Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 280-281.

³²⁴ Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 296. See also Anthony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 222-223. Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 151-153.

the lack of ancient sources and written documents regarding this specific period.³²⁵ However, with the assistance of external sources and archaeological research, information continues to slowly emerge.

First, there have been extreme views in the demographic studies for the province of Judah. The biblical reports account for a rough estimation of at least 50,000 Judaeans who had returned in the restoration programme. Ezra 2:64 conveys the figure of 42,360 returnees while Neh 7:66-67 makes an addition to this of 7,337 by accounting for the slaves and servants.³²⁶ Historically, this would have been a very large group; however is not supported by archaeological studies that have suggested contrasting views. Carter in a thorough observation of excavation sites estimates the population of the returnees from a low of 11,000 during the early period of the Persian rule and eventually increased to a high of 17,000 in the latter stages of the Persian era.³²⁷ In perspective, this would mean that the community in Judah was reasonably small in light of the total population of the province which Weinberg believes may be estimated at 200,000.³²⁸ Whether these figures are historically accurate is another question, but the relevant point here is that there is a general agreement that the population who had returned from exile existed in the province of Judah as a minority community.

³²⁵ Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah," 22. — The only source in the present canon—that is, Ezra-Nehemiah—unfortunately covers only the first and final quarters of the first century of the Persian rule. The activities and the daily operations of the life of the people of Judah remain unclear for presumably 150 years, that is, the majority of the Persian administration which lasted for two centuries.

³²⁶ Josephus' figures are similar to these of the biblical text. For him, the returnees are estimated at 48,462 with an additional 7,337. — *Jewish Antiquities* VI: Book 11, 10.

³²⁷ Charles E. Carter, "The Province of Yehud in the Post Exilic Period," in *Second Temple Studies* 2, ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 129-137.

³²⁸ Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 36.

Second, the concept of family can be complicated as it had existed on various levels depending on the economic needs of their various geographical locations; e.g. while the basis of urban households may have been the nuclear families existing within the private sector of the economy, the basis of the rural household were the extended families. Most households in the rural sector were part of a communal lineage system, which paid taxes to the monarch and despite being pressed by it, they maintained their autonomy throughout.³²⁹ These households had always been the basis of Israelite society and in a period that boasted no monarch, its importance was heightened for the necessity of solidarity and unity of the exilic/post-exilic communities.

However, the very existence of the household structure was threatened by the disrupting events that surrounded the exilic era. First, the violent nature of the exilic events tore families apart through deportation and death. Furthermore, disruption also came with being alienated from their ancestral lands with which family members identified. Second, the geographical settlement of the returning community intensified the threat, that is, the small province was exposed to non-Jews not only by being surrounded by non-Jewish provinces, but also because non-Jews existed within the province of Yehud.³³⁰ According to Kessler, family unity and solidarity had been “taken for granted” but was now seriously considered problematic so that certain measures were taken in order to prevent the society from drifting further apart. Third, social-economic aspects such as debts and class division were also considered disruptive to

³²⁹ Avraham Faust, “Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel” in Yasur-Landau, Assaf, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow. *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill. 2011) 257-273.

³³⁰ Kessler here is alluding to the mixed marriage issues of Ezra.9-10 and Neh.13:23-27, acknowledging the existence of non-Jews in the community. — Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 133.

the solidarity and unity of family and neighbours.³³¹ Stulman takes this point further with the notion of “indigenous outsiders,” believing it to be the major threat to the unity and solidarity of society. These indigenous outsiders refer to individuals or groups within a community whose practices do not concur with the ethical and moral behaviour required by a deity, which in the case of the Jews was *Yahweh*. These individual or groups are assumed to have close associations with the upper classes of the community hierarchies which have the potential to mislead the general population to unorthodox practices unacceptable to *Yahweh*.³³²

Fortunately, the household structure continued to exist in the post-exilic period however, with perhaps an unfortunate element of devolution to it. A solution to the exilic problem of being separated from the ancestral lands and homes was a genealogical list which “registered” the household under the “father’s house.”³³³ Weinberg refers to this as the *bet ab* (father’s house) or the *mispahah* (families) which he believes was developed further into the *bet abot* (house of the fathers, clan).³³⁴ The distinction between the *bet abot* and the *bet ab* or the *mispahah* is that *bet abot* is not restricted within the confines of blood lines, and they should be perceived as unreal family units. Stager provides a brief description of the *bet abot* stating:

... it is likely that the spatially isolated clusters of dwellings—the compounds—house the minimal *bet ab* ... if we assume that a

³³¹ Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 133-134. See also Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*, 289.

³³² For Stulman, the greatest threat to social order in the text is not foreigners outside or inside the borders; the major threat comes from “indigenous outsiders.” —Louis Stulman, “Encroachment in Deuteronomy: An Analysis of the Social World of the D Code,” *JBL* 109/4 (1990): 613-612.

³³³ Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 133.

³³⁴ Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 26-29. Explanation on the *bet abot*: S. R. Driver attributes this reference as unique to the Priestly source (P), and finds that it was only commonly used in post-exilic times. The common terminologies before exile were that of *bet ab* (father’s house) and *mispahah* (families)—Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 133. Further discussion on households follows in chapter four with special focus on the economic dimensions.

honeycomb pattern prevailed at Raddana, that is, an even distribution of contiguous, multiple family compounds throughout the settlement, there might have been 20 or more such households in the village, totalling ca. 200 persons under high fertility—low mortality conditions. But this projection may be too high.... These upper estimates do not take into account the various phases of the family cycle within established multiple family households, the establishment of new nuclear households, and the dissolution of others....³³⁵

In Weinberg's hypothesis of the "citizen-Temple community," the *bet abot* made up the elite class of society and included the priesthood (Neh. 7:1, 39, 43; 8:1-9), singers (Neh. 7:1, 23, 45), Temple servants (Neh. 3:26, 31, 7:46; 11:19), the gatekeepers (Neh. 7:1, 23, 45); a scribal class (Ezra 8:1, 9), the provincial governor and those serving under him.³³⁶ The lower class on the other hand, was made up of those referred to as *tobash* (guest) and *sakir* (day-workers), that is, non-members who were occupying the land of the community. Eventually 18% of the elite class dropped into the peasant category due to social-economic pressures.³³⁷ Such division and differences threatened the unity and solidarity of society as it also brought about conflicts, especially with the issue of rightful ownership of the lands.³³⁸

³³⁵ L. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 22-23.

³³⁶ Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 27-31, 42. See also Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 200. Lester L. Grabbe's socio-economic composition links the distinction of social classes to wealth. While he falls in line with McNutt regarding the composition of the elite, the peasant class were mostly farmers.—Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah*, 172-173.

³³⁷ Peasant members of the community is composed of firstly, the people of the land or rather those who remained in Judah during the exile who have accepted the return of the elites and agreed to their terms for life in the society, and secondly, members of the returning community who were initially landowners themselves, but whose economic status had deteriorated to the state of selling themselves and their families as slaves.—Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 26-30.

³³⁸ Social relations especially between the returnees and those who remained in the Land during exile experience unrest due to the conflicts over (1) determining the true political and religious leadership and (2) land ownership. The deportation of the elite group during exile saw the rise of a new elite class from the peasants who remained in the land. The conflict arises when the exiled elites assume their rightful roles and place in society upon returning to Judah. The lands of these rightful elites were presumably also taken over by the newly formed elite class during their absence; returning to reclaim their lands also initiated ill-feelings in society. — Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 134-139.

The social conditions in Yehud defined a society that was very fragile in nature and threatened to fall apart at any moment. As mentioned earlier, without a king, the household structure was vital to preserve and maintain their identity as Jews. This in turn brings unity and solidarity, especially being amongst people of other ethnic and religious groups. The later development of the household unit would then suggest that the perseverance role would have fallen into the hands of the religious leaders; especially the priesthood.

Politically, the issue of autonomy on the part of the province will be brought into focus. To have an idea of just how much political freedom the Jews enjoyed will contribute to the ideological atmosphere. The question as to the extent of the Persian influence on the governance and life of its subjects—including the province of Yehud—comes to the fore. While the general understanding is that there was a substantial amount of appreciation of the traditions and beliefs of the multi-cultural population under the imperial rule,³³⁹ Noth argues that the real power remained with the imperial rulers.³⁴⁰ We have also noted how careful the imperial rule was about its employees, especially for major positions within the empire.³⁴¹ We have already mentioned the existence of “satrapies”³⁴² as the administrative structure implemented by Darius to impose a solid controlling hand on his empire.³⁴³

³³⁹ Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 277.

³⁴⁰ Noth, *The History of Israel*, 302-303.

³⁴¹ See also the discussion on Persian officials that follow later in this chapter. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, translated by Peter T. Daniels (New York: Eisenbrauns Incorporated, 2002), 350-351. Herodotus, 7:82, Lisbeth Fried in *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*. (San Diego: Eisenbrauns, 2004)

³⁴² “Satrapy” is discussed further in the following section on the “satrap.”

³⁴³ See discussion on “governor” in the section on Imperialism. Hinson, *History of Israel*, 161.

In addition to the administrative structure, imperial government policies also projected a strong Persian presence in Judah. Balentine considers this presence in two very important facets of the people's religious life;

In Yehud, Persian imperial politics were designed to create a colony that would cooperate with the empire's goals. Towards this end the Persian system utilized a number of mechanisms for social control and political maintenance in order to induce and sustain a mutually beneficial relationship between the state and its subject citizens. Of these, two are of particular importance for the task at hand the codification of native law, and the construction and maintenance of regional temples.³⁴⁴

The fact that the Persians favoured temples for the purpose of "administrative centres"³⁴⁵ should by now be a well-known argument in this paper, and we will say no more on it at this point. However, in relation to the codification of the law, the imperial rule had direct participation in the legal activities of the province to ensure that the behaviour of their subjects remained within the precincts of the Persian interests.³⁴⁶ Based on the assumption that there was uniformity of imperial policies for all of their subjects, Blenkinsopp believes that a similar routine occurred in the province of Judah. After comparing the Persian policies with the traditional laws of the Jewish people,

³⁴⁴ Samuel Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period" in *After the Exile: Essays in the Honour of Rex Mason*, ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996), 138.

³⁴⁵ See discussion on 'government temple.' Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah", 51. Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period," 141. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 143.

³⁴⁶ Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period," 139.—N. Reich and Russell E. Gmirkin affirm such practices and refer to the reign of Darius I in which the Egyptian laws were ordered to be revised and recorded. Reich argues that a specific document which was very anti-Persian in nature—designated the 'Demotic Chronicle'—emerged from within Egypt as a response to the modified Egyptian Laws which seemed to adapt the political interests of Darius I and the Persian rule. Reich, "The Codification of the Egyptian Laws by Darius and the Origin of the 'Demotic Chronicle'," *Mizraim* 1 (1933): 178-185. Gmirkin, *Berosus and Genesis, Maneth and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (New York/London: T & T Clark International, 2006), 252. —The 'Demotic Chronicle' is an Egyptian papyrus document of the early second century B.C.E. which contains oracle statements regarding the political history of Egypt in the fourth and possibly the third centuries B.C.E. in which anti-Persian themes, especially focused on Cambyses, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes III were elaborated in Ptolemaic Egyptian sacerdotal and intellectual surroundings. The Persian conquerors of Egypt are called "Medes"

Blenkinsopp concludes that the Torah served both the people of Judah as well as the Persian rule as a “constitutional document.”³⁴⁷

In summary, the religious tolerance of the imperial rulers not only implanted a good image of themselves in the eyes their subject, but it was also partially because there was an element of autonomy granted to the subject peoples. On a more negative front this multi-cultured nature of the empire was always going to be a challenge to the subject people struggle to maintain unity amongst each other. However, this elevated the importance of the unit of family as it had now become the fundamental means to preserve the local identity. Politically, the Persian interests lay firmly in the control and good administration of the empire.

3.3. The Ruling Classes

Now that we have an idea of the imperial form of governance and leadership, it is not easy to see an independent form of governance on the local level that is, within Yehud. While there appears to be a wide acceptance of the leading roles of the priesthood in the Persian period,³⁴⁸ others have also proposed that the “elders” of the community and villages were also active in their leadership roles.³⁴⁹ The present study takes up the views of Blenkinsopp and Weinberg that local governance and leadership was left in the hands of an assembly consisting of both the tribal elders and temple personnel.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 239-242.

³⁴⁸ Hinson represents advocates of the claim that the priesthood—especially the high priest—was responsible for the local governance as well as the religious affairs of the province of Judah.—Hinson, *History of Israel*, 161.

³⁴⁹ R. Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 374-375.

³⁵⁰ Blenkinsopp, “Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah,” 22-53. J. Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, JSOTSup, trans. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 26-29.

At this point, we are still faced with the historical issue of the extent of the authority and power granted to these local leaders. Dandamayev's theory of self-governance suggests that the imperial government impeded as little as possible with the traditional ways of life of the various provinces as a way of showing respect.³⁵¹ Weinberg also argues for an autonomous nature of governance³⁵² but Blenkinsopp pushes for a semiautonomous understanding.³⁵³ Berquist also perceives the influence of the Persian superiors as varying throughout the period,³⁵⁴ that there was a mixture of tolerance and imposing demands³⁵⁵—while a strong Persian presence seemed to be the norm of the day, it may have had the tendency to weaken at times. This study upholds the semiautonomous argument strictly based on the grounds that the imperial rule itself was not crisis-free. Crisis within the empire may have diverted the watchful eye of the Persian authorities, granting the opening for the local leaders to exercise full authority in Yehud. In addition however, in such a scenario there is also the question of loyalty to the imperial rule and the risk of exercising their power for causes that do not sympathize with the imperial interests. These local leaders may have strived to maintain a good relationship with the imperial rule as these leading roles were now appointed by the Persian government themselves. It is for that very reason that the Jewish priesthood and the no-longer existent monarchy will be discussed under Persian officials.

³⁵¹ M. Dandamayev cited in Lisbeth S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (San Diego: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 129.

³⁵² The hypothesis of the 'citizen-Temple community' was proposed by Joel Weinberg. This model of the communities and cities proposes that the temple was an autonomous administrative centre governed by an alliance of temple personnel and the local community leaders.—Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 29.

³⁵³ Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah," 26.

³⁵⁴ Jon Berquist, "The Social Context of Postexilic Judaism," in *Passion, Vitality and Foment: The Dynamics of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Lamontte M. Luker (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), 34-35.

³⁵⁵ R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 617.

We shall now analyze the Yehud social classes and their respective positions, commencing with the ruling classes and concluding with a view of the ruled. In the book of Haggai, we have representations of the ruling classes³⁵⁶ in Zerubbabel representing royalty and the institution of the monarchy; however, on a more official level falls under the category of “governors.” Joshua and Haggai represent the religious institutions of the priesthood and prophets.

3.3.1. Persian Officials

In this section, we are reminded that Yehud was part of a wider context, i.e. the Persian empire, and while the office of the major divisions – referred to as satrapies – may have been strictly reserved for Persian individuals, there were also more local offices – such as the office of the governor and the High priest – which employed locals of the various communities. One element all these offices had in common was the direct appointment to these posts by the imperial rule and ruler himself. This is the reason for classifying them as Persian officials.

The Satrap

Darius is believed to have implemented a system of provincial areas called “satrapies” with the aim to impose a more solid control on the enormous empire he had inherited.³⁵⁷ According to Herodotus there were a total of twenty satrapies each ruled

³⁵⁶ While Darius (king of Persia) is mentioned in the text, our immediate concern here is contradictions in the Yehud community; thus, our task is to focus on those representing Darius and Persian interests in Yehud.

³⁵⁷ Hinson, *History of Israel*, 161. See also Noth, *The History of Israel*, 302-303. Ackroyd—who from a historical perspective, assesses the Jewish thought under the Babylonian and Persian empires—agrees with Noth and affirms that the tolerant nature of the Persian rulers was maintained as long as their political aspirations were not harmed. Peter R. Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon and Persia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 165.

by Persian officials called satraps. The term “satrap” derives from the Persian expression “*xsacapaban*” which literally means “protector of the kingdom/kingship.” Each satrapy was divided into smaller subdivisions with an appointed governor, and apart from keeping a firm hand on the proceedings of the empire this structure also ensured a continuous inflow of income through tributes and taxation.³⁵⁸ Zerubbabel was governor of Yehud, which was a sub-province of the Persian satrapy named “Beyond the River.”

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Carter’s reconstruction – through examination and synthesis of archaeological, social and economic data – of the systematic way the independent satrapies were laid out may give more clarity to the structure and its purposes. Using the satrapy of “Beyond the River” as an example, Carter reconstructs the boundaries of Judah including settlement sizes, population, economic patterns and social structures. Carter proposes a network of towns, villages and hamlets which were not only connected with each other but are associated with a central place or city from where the governing and administration is carried out. Jerusalem is considered as such a place. In neighbouring provinces, the places of Gezer and Lachish – with the assistance of archaeological research – are proven to have functioned as administrative centres.³⁶⁰

Thus, a satrapy was a vast area. Further, not only would the imperially-appointed satrap be the face of the imperial ruler himself in the provinces, but may also very likely

³⁵⁸ Herodotus, 3.89.

³⁵⁹ “Beyond the River” meant the region west of the Euphrates. Palestine belonged to this satrapy. Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, trans. & ed. by A. F. Rainey (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 411.

³⁶⁰ Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 90-97.

be of Persian descent.³⁶¹ The question as to how involved the satrap was concerning the local affairs of the provinces will be highlighted in the following discussions of the provincial leadership.

The Governor

It is not exactly clear how the office of the מְדָנָה “governor” should be understood in the Hebrew bible, due to the uncertainty surrounding its usages – e.g. Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:14), Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:7; Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 20) and Tattenai (Ezra 5:3, 6; 6:6, 13) all had different extents to their authority. Despite the indistinctness, Zerubbabel is referred to the as פַּחַת יְהוּדָה “governor of Yehud.”³⁶²

We have already touched on the understanding, that the office of the governor together with the high priest – as noted in the text – represented the respective institutions of the priesthood and the monarchy.³⁶³ They had equal authority – respectively – over Yehud’s political and religious matters.³⁶⁴ Relationships with the satraps on the other hand may have been quite different: due to the hierarchy of authority, governors would report directly to the satraps, so the extent of any real authority Zerubbabel may have had appears insignificant. Furthermore, highly ranked officials³⁶⁵ within the empire were all of Persian ethnic origin. In saying that, two

³⁶¹ Pierre Briant constructs a table from a variety of ancient sources revealing that the satraps, especially in the early period of the Persian rule were normally of Persian origins. — Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, translated by Peter T. Daniels (New York: Eisenbrauns Incorporated, 2002), 350-351.

³⁶² Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 6-8.

³⁶³ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 17-18.

³⁶⁴ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 17.

³⁶⁵ Another high ranking office which co-existed with the satrap in the province was the military commander, once again believed to be an office occupied mainly by members of the royal family. Herodotus, 7:82, lists names associated with the ‘land army.’ 7:97, reports that the king replicated the same approach concerning the navy. This particular office according to Herodotus like the satrap reported directly to the highest authority and in a list he provides, all who are mentioned fall in the confines of the royal family. The impressive administrative character of the Persian rulers can be seen in this treatment

matters come to mind: the first is the confirmation of a semi-autonomous nature of the office of governor; and second, while provincial offices apart from the top – such as the various sub-provincial governors – may have been filled by the locals, it would be in the imperial governments best interest to carefully chose locals who were loyal to the Persian ideals.³⁶⁶

In the book of Haggai – probably more than his contemporaries – the office of the governor may have been seen as a representation of the monarchy in Judah. Furthermore, while Haggai utilizes the title of office four times with reference to Zerubbabel (Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 20), Ezra-Nehemiah and Zechariah do not make such a connection. How are we to interpret such discrepancy? For Meyers and Meyers, the absences from these books are deliberate as part of their rhetoric. In Zechariah, the absence is seen as an attempt to subdue expectations of the Davidic throne and restoration through the hopeful Zerubbabel. The reason was the danger of the rise of Zerubbabel and the monarchy simultaneously would see the rise of an administration which would be tainted with Persian dominance.³⁶⁷ Furthermore, Ezra-Nehemiah's silence is also deliberate and should not be read as a historical fact.

of the satraps and the military. The presence of both offices are evident in the individual satrapies, but both work in parallel with each other—Lisbeth Fried in *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*. (San Diego: Eisenbrauns, 2004) believes that in the absence of the satrap, the military commander takes his role in overseeing the province—both also working directly from the instructions of the king. This to some degree ensures further control and peace within the empire due to the fact that while they work alongside each other, they also keep an eye on each other to ensure the imperial command is adhered to. Furthermore, the chance of a satrap uprising against the central authority has just been made very slim.

³⁶⁶ Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew in the Book of Haggai”, 332. The term “governor” in the biblical text was usually a reference to foreign rulers (e.g. 1 Kgs 10:15, 20:24; 2 Kgs 18:24; Isa 36:9, Jer 51[3x]; Ezek 23[3x]) Also used 3 times in Esther and 5 times in Ezra-Nehemiah to refer to Persian governors.

³⁶⁷ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 15.

Meyers and Meyers have charted the governors with the corresponding high priest for the first 100 years of the Yehud community and while the appointed governors of Yehud did not always emerge from the Davidic lineage, being a descendant of David seemed to be a prerequisite of the officer of the governor in the early restoration period, at least definitely in the time of Haggai.³⁶⁸ Thus, early on there is a strong sense of connection between the office of the governor and that of the monarchy; moreover, the governors were directly appointed by the Persian ruler, thus keeping them loyal to Persian rule.

In contrast then to Zechariah, Haggai is definitely pro-monarchic. As we pointed out earlier in our analysis, the royal ideal appears to be undermined by the imperial ideal in the text; however, it continues to surface sporadically in the text, finally to reveal its intentions in its entirety with the eschatological section on Zerubbabel at the end. The question is, how would word of intentions to restore the Davidic throne sit with the interests of the imperial authority? Does the fact that the Persian authority deliberately appointed these potential future heirs – to their respective thrones – as Persian governors indicate a ploy to continue undermining them? It is quite possible that this may be the case. The point is that such an announcement would definitely not be in the best interests of the likes of Zerubbabel and others of the royal lineage. To look beyond the Persian office of the governor to the hope of restoring the institution of the Judean king would be considered a possible threat to the Persian authority on many levels. Thus, the word concerning Zerubbabel can have a double impact, i.e. positively to arouse

³⁶⁸ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 14.

the people's hope in the Davidic throne, while on the negative front; it also reports a sense of ill-feeling towards the imperial rule, initiated in the person of Zerubbabel.

It has been suggested (Albertz)³⁶⁹ that Zerubbabel suddenly disappears from the historical records with no knowledge of what may have happened to him. Whether there is any credibility in this hypothesis, we may never know given the lack of historical resources of this time; however the main issue here is the ideological function of the text and the social world it represents. While the pro-monarchic element of the text supports the reestablishment of the Davidic throne, at the same time, it appears also to deliberately sound off a warning to the Persian rulers of royal intentions in Yehud. This leads to a more important question: whose interests would benefit from the suppressing of the office of the monarch? From a literary point of view, it is highly probable that the office in the following discussion may claim some of that responsibility.

The High Priest and the Priesthood

Probably the most prominent institution amongst the ruling authorities in Yehud during the Persian era is the office of the high priest and the priesthood. We shall discuss the priesthood in light of the Persian backdrop in seeking an insight into their ideological standpoint.

At this point, not much more can be said about the religious policies of the Persian rule. However, to consider the propaganda on the part of the imperial rule as discussed, we cannot escape a sceptical attitude towards their religious policy. The open-minded attitude to the religious beliefs of the diverse nature of the exiles was a major theme of the Cyrus Cylinder, and understandably so, as freedom of religion

³⁶⁹ R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 617.

contributed to his successful acceptance by the Babylonians.³⁷⁰ For the minority of Jewish exiles who remained loyal to the cult, this tolerant aspect would have been considered as a blessing from *Yahweh*.³⁷¹ But was it really?

The returnees considered themselves as the continuation of the cultic community which was destroyed in 587/586 B.C.E.³⁷² Maintaining of certain traditions and customs of the pre-exilic cult gave them their own sense of independence whilst in exile.³⁷³ However, to assume that the religion upheld by the returnees was essentially a continuation of the earlier cult would be a misconception. Miller has shown how much of a struggle it would be to define an orthodox Jewish religion. While it is possible to point out a handful of factors which are supposedly distinct to the Israelite cult, the affiliation with other deities and their practices of worship, as a feature of Yahwism, was ominous from a very early stage of the cult's history. As opposed to the orthodox Yahwism, Miller expresses these affiliations in terms of "heterodox Yahwism" and "syncretistic Yahwism."³⁷⁴ While the former is more concerned with the appropriation of practices contradictory of the orthodox, – such as the use of cultic objects, consultation of diviners, witches etc. for the divine will – the latter assimilated aspects of worship of other deities in their worship of *Yahweh*.³⁷⁵ It would then be easy to assume that the post-exilic cult was somewhat influenced by the Zoroastrian religion of

³⁷⁰ As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, Cyrus' actions of removing decrees which restricted religious freedom and worship, the restoration of the statues to their rightful places was greatly welcomed by the Babylonians who were threatened by Nabonidus' worship of the moon god Sin.

³⁷¹ Ahlstrom, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, 817.

³⁷² Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1994), 142.

³⁷³ Hinson, *History of Israel*, 178.

³⁷⁴ Patrick D. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, Ed. Douglas A. Knight (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 46-62.

³⁷⁵ Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 51-57.

their imperial rulers, especially with the significant convincing parallels³⁷⁶ noticed between the two. Arguments have been extreme in both directions and accordingly, W. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson see truth in both cases. Although it may have been true that there was no influence for most of the parallel ideas, the notions of eschatology and apocalypticism as Persian-influenced certainly cannot be denied,³⁷⁷ furthermore, the long history of association and assimilation as explained by Miller goes beyond to expose the character and nature of the Israelite people. Thus, it would be in their nature to synchronize with Zoroastrian at some level. Other major features of the cult continued by the post-exilic community were that of the temple, priesthood and the Law.

The main functions of the priesthood had always been to reconcile and mediate on behalf of the Israelites where holiness was the main requirement of reconciliation. Their work and everything about it represented the larger relationship between God and His people.³⁷⁸ This work included overseeing of all ritual acts within the temple, sacrificial rites, relaying to the people things that were pure and impure in line with the cult, and they also passed on blessings to the people.³⁷⁹ A late development to these religious roles was the interpretation of the law which was a necessity in their additional judicial and legal roles during the second temple period.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ W. O. E. Oesterley, Theodore H. Robinson, *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*, second edition (London: SPCK, 1957), 312-314. —In this study of the Hebrew Religion, the authors discuss the parallels between the Jewish religion and Persian religion of Zoroastrianism. The following are some of the noticeable equivalents; Zoroaster appeared as a reformer and spiritualizer who believed in a monotheistic god, the sole creator of all things, the great emphasis on moral living to be guided by code of laws, the notion of the kingdom of God on earth, the cult was a book-religion as the Jewish cult eventually came to be, the pre-existence of a personified Law, angelology and demonology.

³⁷⁷ Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion*, 314.

³⁷⁸ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 84-85.

³⁷⁹ John J. Castelot and Aelred Cody, *Religious Institutions of Israel: New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 1258. See also Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 162-165.

³⁸⁰ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 194. Castelot and Cody, *Religious Institutions of Israel*, 1256.

Knight's discussion on the distinct nature of the "Law" from the "laws" will be important at this point. The "Law" (*Jus* in Latin) is abstract in nature and refers to the entire legal system representing social order. Its communal or societal characteristic denotes that any transgression of the Law – by breaking any of the laws which shall be discussed next – is an offence to the whole of society, i.e. it caused disruption to the social order. The punishment therefore is regarded as the attempt to restore the harmonious life of society or social groups. The "laws" (*lex* in Latin) on the other hand, is more concrete as opposed to the abstract nature of the Law. The laws not only forbid "specific conduct," imposed certain duties and responsibilities, these laws also functioned to clearly specify the consequences of violating the laws. The various nuances of the Hebrew concept תּוֹרָה "law/instruction" is associated to these Latin concepts. For Knight, תּוֹרָה as *Jus* functions as a "theocratic symbol – to affirm that the legal order is ordained by God, and at least by implication, that the leaders of the country or the priest are its caretakers." On the other hand, תּוֹרָה as *lex* means "instruction" and this didactic function governed the life of the Israelite community. Instruction was provided by teachers which came in various forms within the community, i.e. parents, sages, priests, friends, and most importantly *Yahweh*.³⁸¹

This distinction brings the discussion to another facet of the Law. Knight at the outset distinguishes and makes a contrasting comparison between Israelite laws and the biblical laws. While the former can be easily equated with the customary laws, the latter "designates law-like material recorded in the Hebrew Bible."³⁸² In more detail, Israelite

³⁸¹ Douglas A. Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, Library of Ancient Israel, ed. Douglas A. Knight (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 50-53.

³⁸² Take note especially of the Decalogue (Exod 20:2-17; Deut 5:5-21), The various codes; i.e. Covenant Code – also known as the Book of the Covenant – (Exod 21:1-23:19), Deuteronomistic Code (Deut

laws emerged amongst the people themselves. They were regulations which were issued by leaders of the communities³⁸³ which had some form of judicial power. These laws were not usually written but would circulate naturally through social norms with the intentions to act as social controls and to emphasise “judicial correctives for human behaviour.”³⁸⁴ The biblical laws on the other hand, are written as mentioned. Unlike the customary laws, there is a distinct legislator which find form in the “divine or legendary figures” which in Israel’s case would *Yahweh*, or Moses as an example. Another major difference between the laws is the fact that biblical laws have an agenda other than legal control. They could function as a preservation of history, divine revelation, to regulate power and legitimize cultic practices, etc. Furthermore, while customary laws apply specifically to a specific context and time, biblical laws are meant to transcend these barriers and to be appropriated by all people of various periods. For Knight, Israelite laws should not be equated with biblical laws as not all laws of Israel found their way into the canon.³⁸⁵ So, by Law we are referring to the abstract wider understanding which in effect accounts for laws in general. Furthermore, while the biblical law may be the focus of the discussions, customary laws are also assumed in general.

The law contributed heavily to the good image of the priesthood in the eyes of the people especially as its importance had heightened with the exilic experience for two reasons: first, the exilic community understood their current situation as the outcome

12-26), Holiness Code (Lev 17-26), and the Priestly Code (all other laws in Exod, Lev, and Num). Knight, *Law. Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 16-24.

³⁸³ Knight charts the various local contexts and the respective judicial leaders and legislators. For example, the family unit would be overseen by the household head. In the case of clans and tribes, the clan elders would have authority. Knight, *Law. Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 68-70.

³⁸⁴ Knight, *Law. Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 10.

³⁸⁵ Knight, *Law. Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 12-16.

of disobedience to the Laws of *Yahweh*,³⁸⁶ thus, to avoid further destructions, the upholding of the Law was important. Second, the absence of fundamental institutions of the Jewish world—the monarchy and the Temple—during the exile experience threatened to disrupt the Jewish way of life.³⁸⁷ For Knight, the local teachings and instructions weakened during the exile and the focus was now on the teachings of the cult and *Yahweh*.³⁸⁸ For almost a century, the exiled Jews had to cope and find ways to maintain and preserve their way of life and identities; people fell back to the law.

The leading men of this period were primarily concerned with preserving the religious uniqueness of the Jewish people against all foreign influences. They needed a unifying element taken from the ancient heritage of Israel around which the new community could unite and survive. This they found in the law ...³⁸⁹

This elevated importance of the law—which continued even though the temple was rebuilt—had vital consequences. Ringgren believes that the threat posed by Darius I's scheme of "codification of laws" had given rise to the idea of canonization which would preserve the religious and cultural identities of the Jews. With the formation of the canon it is obvious that a future-oriented vision was also at work with the concern for the future generations. Second, appropriating the law to everyday life was of the utmost importance and required interpreters; thus the emergence of the scribes. Third is the equating of the law—symbolic of life—with wisdom traditions. Ringgren mentions

³⁸⁶Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup Vol 15 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 76-78, Noth, *The History of Israel*, 340-341.

³⁸⁷ While in the pre-exilic era the temple had been considered "royal property" in which the managing of the financing and maintenance of the temple seemed to be under the authority of the king, the temple was now considered as the property of the people or rather the citizens as Weinberg coins. These functions of the monarch were now upheld and controlled by the high priest—whose position was now established at the top of the hierarchy.— Georg Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, translated by David E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 331. Kessler reports that the 'anointing' which was reserved for the king, was now adapted by the high priest in succession. —Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 145.

³⁸⁸ Knight, *Law. Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 52.

³⁸⁹ Helmer Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, translated by David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 302.

that they were both “incarnations of God’s revelation,” and finally in conjunction with this, reflecting on the law had become a norm for the people. Its function which was to provide guidelines for appropriate behaviour that would in turn reward man with life, and in order to comply with these laws, they were to be accurately comprehended.³⁹⁰

As administrators of the law and justice, the priesthood would work hand in hand with the imperial command in both civil and religious matters.³⁹¹ The interaction between the two types of laws remains unclear, especially with the people of Judah whose everyday life seemed inseparable from the religious.

What is clear is that the office of the high priest in coalition with the elders³⁹² had jurisdiction in the province of Judah, and the extent of authority would only be as much as the imperial civil laws allowed. Thus, assuming that even the religious laws were overshadowed by the imperial mindset³⁹³ suggests that justice which was accepted and practiced as the norm in the returning community would really have been Persian form

³⁹⁰ Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, 302-309.

³⁹¹ A distinction is made between the civil and religious laws. The civil laws are believed to have been directly administered by the Imperial ruler himself. We may take note especially of Darius I involvement with the codification of the traditional law, furthermore, the destruction of the Egyptian temples by Cambyses demonstrates the monarch stepping in to carry out punishment against rebellious subjects. Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon and Persia*, 165. Capital punishments would be ordered by the imperial ruler on offences against the state or the royal family and any form of injustice within the empire; even the lesser judges received the death penalty for corrupt judgment and practices. Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Grecians, and Macedonians: Including a History of the Arts and Sciences of the Ancients*, Vol.1 (New York: George Dearborn Publisher, 1836), 148-149. See also Herodotus 3:119. Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 200. —Hinson may be more accurate in his explanation that civil law would have been administered by the appointed governors of the various satraps with the religious affairs remaining in the hands of the high priest. *History of Israel*, 169.

³⁹² The discussion of ‘elders’ follow in the next section.

³⁹³ The religious laws were under the authority of the priesthood with the high priest presiding over such matters. This should not automatically mean that the religious laws were not tainted with the Persian influence as even the religious practices may have operated in such a way to avoid transgressing the civil laws and regulations of the central authority. In other words, religious laws which operate within the confines of the imperial civil laws would have been supported by the Persian government. Noth, *The History of Israel*, 314-315.

of justice.³⁹⁴ The administering of justice then would be perceived as being directed from the imperial ruler through his loyal officials that were scattered all over the empire. However, this still does not take away from the fact that the priesthood was definitely in a favorable position of the Yehud hierarchy.³⁹⁵ Furthermore, such favorable circumstances also meant that enemies were not too far away.³⁹⁶

The struggle for leadership between the Zadokite and Levite families has long haunted the priesthood.³⁹⁷ It is evident that the priestly class had their own agendas and interests, and it is possible that these interests could also play a role in tainting their judgements and decisions as leaders of the post-exilic society. If we were to take into

³⁹⁴ Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel*, 146.

³⁹⁵ Knight discusses the different levels of leadership within the Israelite cult. There are the “non-professionals” – who were cultic officials but also had other primary roles in the economy and community life – and the “professionals” who were focussed strictly on their cultic roles. The high priest and the priesthood fall under the latter and oversaw the cult from the context of the state. On the other hand, the former would include farmers, and even the elders and operated at the level of the domestic and sometimes regional cults. Knight, *Law. Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 81-82.

³⁹⁶ We must also take note that even the priesthood maintained a hierarchy within themselves with duties assigned accordingly. The high priest descended from the pre-exilic line of the high priest Zadok, who served the role as the principal community leader for the Jews after the exile. The other temple priests—descending from Aaron and Levi—were responsible for more basic liturgical duties and other required administrative functions. Furthermore, security and ensuring the ceremonial cleanliness within the temple was also part of their job. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, Fourth Edition (Louisville/London: Westminster – John Knox Press, 2000), 435. Castellet and Cody, *Religious Institutions of Israel*, 1258.

³⁹⁷ Paul D. Hanson identifies these two opposing groups within the postexilic community. The first of which he refers to as “Hierocratic Party of the Zadokites;” this group consists of “the leading priestly group of the post-exilic period whose centre of power was the Second Temple in Jerusalem.” The opposing group is referred to as “visionary” because they resorted to “visionary motifs” for hope of restoration. The conflict has a long history which relates back to the struggle of the two priestly houses of Judah for control of the central cult, that is, Zadokites and the Levites. The Zadokites had eventually gained power after the death of King David and have remained in that position over the Levites even up to the postexilic period. Zechariah, Ezekiel, Haggai are all part of this party. The second group on the other hand can be seen in light of their conflicting nature towards the hierarchy. While the Second Temple is of major importance to the hierocratic, the visionaries are wary of the Persian support behind it, it spells for them a Persian-Israelite alliance, the danger of the union is the threat it poses to the sovereignty and self-rule of Yahweh. Secondly, they saw that the corrupt nature of the leaders easily led them astray from God. The third issue was the “virtual indifference” with regards to “eschatology”. They simply had little or no concern at all and regarded the temple and the priesthood as untouchable, vulnerable to nothing even judgment.—*The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1952), 220-280.—Yairah Amit believes that a characteristic which is unique to the book of Deuteronomy is viewing the Levites as part of the deprived and oppressed. Amit, *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*, translated by Yael Lotan (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 54.

account the understanding that the office was directly appointed by the Persian government,³⁹⁸ then the encouraging of loyalty and obedience to the Persian Empire would also have been part of their responsibility. In other words, to stay in office and power, they would ensure that the Persian interests were served. Despite any internal conflict within their ranks, it would have been in their general interests to uphold the beneficial position of the priesthood.

Given the fact that a great amount of the Persian interests – whether it be socially, economically, politically or religiously – depended heavily on the temple and its various functions also meant that the status and importance of the temple priests would also be elevated. As far as the local community is concerned, the Law ensured the people's obedience and loyalty as their salvation depended on it.³⁹⁹ Furthermore, the priesthood would also be enjoying the process of codification and the preserving of traditions as a way to not only spread but maintain their priestly ideals to wider communities.

After this discussion of the priesthood in general, we now narrow down to acknowledge the power of the office of the “high priest,” who not only headed the priesthood but would have been a very influential individual in the returning community. The usage of the term “high priest” emerged in the sixth century as reflected in the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. It designates the person of Joshua the son of Jehozadak not only in Haggai (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4) but also Zechariah (Zech 3:8; 6:11).⁴⁰⁰ The Hebrew *הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל* is literally “*the great priest*” or the “*chief priest*” and is not to be presumed as synonymous with the sixth century term. In other words,

³⁹⁸Hinson, *History of Israel*, 161.

³⁹⁹ Norman Snaith, *The Jews from Cyrus to Herod*, Gateway Handbooks of Religious Knowledge, third edition (London: The Religious Education Press Ltd, 1963), 147-148.

⁴⁰⁰ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 17.

the high priest in terms of function and representation was quite different from the earlier chief priest.

Initially the term was used as a designation rather than a title (Lev 21:10). This Levitical account talks simply of the high priests position in comparison to fellow priests, i.e. “...the one among his brothers...”: this is complimented by Ezra’s reference to Aaron who is referred to as the “head priest” (Ezra 7:5), which for Meyers and Meyers designates the “first” priest. This notion of the first or head seem to associate later with the temple, where the head priest would be referred to as simply the priest of Jerusalem or priest of Bethel. The association of the high priest with the Levitical cities of refuge (Exod 21:12-14; Num 35:9-34; Deut 19:1-13; Joshua 20:1-9) show a move from this reference to the head priest of the temple or Jerusalem to designating the head priests in these various cities. Finally, evident in the Deuteronomic author, are additional functions of as revealed in Jehoiada and Hilkiah; i.e. the administering of revenue collection for temple expenses (2 Kgs 12:11; 22:4, 8; 23:4). For Meyers and Meyers, Haggai’s employing of the term high priest portrays an administrative side that is not associated with hierarchy of the Jerusalem temple, i.e. they were responsible for collecting funds for temple expenses, which leads them to the conclusion that this may have been one of Joshua’s main functions in collaboration with Zerubbabel.

Apart from that, the absence of Zerubbabel’s title in contrast to the high priest (Hag 1:12) can be perceived as a sign of the high priest’s ascending power over the office of the governor; i.e. from the perspective of the local organization in Yehud.⁴⁰¹ The absence of the office of the monarch during the exilic and post-exilic periods did see the

⁴⁰¹ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 50.

rise of the priesthood and in particular the office of the high priest in terms of leadership and significance. In summary, we can safely presume that the high priest and the priesthood would have been very pro-imperial in ideals and given their very privileged status and position at the peak of the Yehud hierarchy, they would probably be pushing to maintain and sustain the status quo.⁴⁰²

3.3.2. Local Leaders

The Elders

The elders are not mentioned in the book of Haggai. However, we do know from other historical sources that the elders continued to exist and play an important role amongst the leadership group after exile (Ezra 3:12; 6:14).⁴⁰³ Determining exactly the make-up of the elders continues a topic of debate, although Willis does propose three possible structures. First he proposes the seventy men (Exod 24; Num 11) tradition which is said to later evolve to become the Sanhedrin.⁴⁰⁴ Second are the elders referred to as the “elders of the kings house” (2 Sam 12:17; Gen 24:2; 50:7; 1 Kgs 12:6-15; Ps 105:22) who were considered to be administrative advisors but are said to have disappeared after the destruction of Jerusalem. Finally we have the “elders of the city” (Deut 19:12; 21:2-8; 21:19-20; 22:15-19; 25:7-9; Josh 20:4-5, Judg 8:14-16; 11:5-11; Ruth 4:1-12; 1 Sam 11:3; 16:4; 1 Kgs 21:8-12; Ezra 10:14; Prov 31:23) which is most

⁴⁰² Stephen Patrick Riley, “When the Empire does not strike back: Reading Jonah in light of Empire” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol.47, no.1 (Spring 2012), 116-126.

⁴⁰³ Taking into consideration the structure of the satrapies as discussed, with the reintroducing of the various village type settlements would see the requirement of village leadership which in the past found form in the elders. Furthermore, Blenkinsopp believes that a similar system was functional with the minority communities in Babylonia and may have been retained by those who had returned from exile. Blenkinsopp, “Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah,” 22-53.

⁴⁰⁴ By the second century B.C.E., we read of a council comprised of aristocratic elders (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 12.3.3), which by the first century was known as the Sanhedrin (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14.9.3-5).

probably the structure we are dealing with. These elders are said to have three major functions; i.e. judicial roles (Deut 19:1-13; 21:1-9; 21:18-21; 22:13-21; 25:5-10; Jos 20:1-9), handling of land transactions (Ruth 4:1-12), and representing their respective communities (1 Sam 16:1-5). Despite the various images portrayed of the elders in the biblical text, we can continue to form a general opinion with regards to their role in society.⁴⁰⁵

There may have been no major changes to the elder's office following the Babylonian exile, especially in terms of structure and function (Ezra 10:14; Jer 29:1; Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1, 3). However, the dispersion of the Jews did have an impact. The Jews in non-Jewish cities were forced to form their own communities within these cities; thus, leading men from these communities were now serving as elders. In other words, the disintegration of the tribal unit saw influential families move in to fill the void of authority left by the breakdown of the clan. Whereas the elders' authority once derived from their position within the tribe, real authority now became based on the prominence of a particular family and an aristocratic ruling class emerged. This emphasis on family⁴⁰⁶ is further underscored when taking into consideration certain laws with which they were involved; i.e. blood redemption where the elders seek to appease the murdered person's family by delivering the murder (Deut 19:12), expiation of murder by an unknown offender (Deut 21:3, 6), protecting a family from rebellious son and defamation (Deut 21:19; 22:15), and preventing the distinction of family from their own town (Deut 25:9). According to Knight, the elder's dealt with customary laws

⁴⁰⁵ Tim Willis, "The Elders of the City: A Study of the Elders-Laws in Deuteronomy," Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 55 (SBL Press: 2001),

⁴⁰⁶ The importance of the family unit (*bet av* – "father's house") is once again highlighted here. Note that the basic family unit referred to here is the "extended" rather than the "nuclear."

while the codified laws were the responsibilities of the high priest and priesthood. Being part of the cultic hierarchy as discussed earlier would simply mean that they are fulfilling their cultic responsibilities regardless of if they are the judicators or not.

At this point, it is evident that the judicial authority of the elders may have been very limited. Here, we see matters which simply required professional judgment in the form of judges (Deut 16:19; 19:17–18; 25:1–3). In regards to the monarchy, we may suggest that the office of the elders may have had a strong influence with regards to power and authority, as the kings consulted the elders for their counsel (1 Kgs 20:7; 2 Sam 3:17; 5:3; 17:4, 15), and may have even extended that power against the monarch at times (2 Kgs 6:32; Jer 26:17). Taking this into consideration, the existence of the office of the monarch would probably be more favourable to the elders as it also presented them with authority.

Thus, we pose the question: how are we to perceive the elder's relationship with regards to imperial rule? Let us attempt to match the office of the elders with a specific ideologeme(s): on the one hand, it is very likely that they are pro-Davidic and support the royal cause for the very reason we have just discussed, power and authority. We can probably say that they would have to be more anti-imperial in nature due to the fact that the imperial administration heavily favoured the priesthood. Although elders were historically the oldest institution, in later times they became less important compared to the priests and scribes.⁴⁰⁷ So it is possible that the elders may have been yearning and eagerly anticipating the day when the office of the monarch was to be restored. On the other hand, the relationship is not that simple as there would have also been times

⁴⁰⁷ R. Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 374-375.

when loyalty to the imperial rule may have been upheld for the sake of their respective families and communities.

The Prophets

Where do the prophetic circles and their agenda stand in the struggle for power and dominance? In support of the monarch, the prophets would have preferred the king to oversee the temple as they did in the past.⁴⁰⁸ Note how the text builds up the character of the prophet especially in the poetic sections, only to undermine this tendency by the formal feature of prose; in the end, poetic is dominated by the prose element. Prophets did have the ability to express visions in powerful language, which has been referred to as “poetic power of expression”⁴⁰⁹ The close association with the language of Deuteronomy – as we have already discussed in the previous chapter – appeals to the audience by the close affiliation between the prophet and the Mosaic traditions. This works rhetorically to benefit the message being delivered, but also to serve the interests of the prophet himself on a more personal level.

On a more social level, Gottwald has theorized that for the loyal Persian subjects, the king of Persia was considered to some extent a form of substitute, accounting for the absence of the Davidic throne. Such imperial ideals would not have been fully embraced by all, especially those who have a lot to gain from the reestablishment of the monarchy. Ezra 5:3-17 reports of the arrival the satrap Tattenai in Jerusalem to deal with the growing expectations and hopes of the people to revolt and re-establish the nation of Israel—a hope which was grounded in the Davidic covenant and the Davidic heir,

⁴⁰⁸ Georg Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, translated by David E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 331.

⁴⁰⁹ Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to the Failure of Prophecy in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 42.

Zerubbabel. To add more tension to this discussion, Zerubbabel mysteriously disappears from the biblical accounts whilst the prophets Haggai and Zechariah do not live to see the completion of the temple. For some, such as Albertz, Zerubbabel may have been withdrawn because of the threat he symbolizes to the imperial rule. The prophetic movements also prominent may have received the same treatment. The fact that the prophets were not at the completion of the temple is also speculated as suggesting aggressive and violent actions against them.⁴¹⁰

3.4. The Ruled Class

Our focus now shifts from the ruling class to the majority who fall under the classification of the ruled. As the ruled class, we presume that they function to undermine the ruling ideology and way of life.

3.4.1. People

We are now left with one group yet to be discussed from the text, i.e. there is a general reference to a “people” who are fittingly presented to have contrasting priorities with that of their leaders. Apart from being referred to as the “people” in general (Hag 1:2, 12, 13), we find three other ways in which the text of Haggai refers to this group, i.e. “remnant of the people...” (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2), “people of the land” (Hag 2:4), and the parallel use of “people” and the concept of “nation” (Hag 2:14). For Meyers and Meyers, there is great difficulty in trying to associate each term with a specific group or segment of the population; rather, there are overlaps which would be determined and defined by

⁴¹⁰ R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 617.

the “interplay of religio-political forces.”⁴¹¹ The task is to discuss each group and attempt to construct an opinion on the identity of the people in general.

Remnant of the People

The concept of remnant is an important theme within the Bible. In general the word simply refers to “what is left” or “remainders” or more specifically a part which is left after the greater part has been removed or destroyed. When referring to people, the remnant then is what is left of a community after a catastrophe. We take note of the following terms in the Old Testament – יָתֵר *“remainder, excess, what is left over”* (Deut 3:11; 28:54; Josh 12:4)⁴¹²; שְׁאֵר *“the rest”* (Ezra 3:8; Isa 10:20, 21, 22; 11:16; Zech 1:4)⁴¹³; and שְׁאֲרִית *“rest, residue, remnant”* (2 Kgs 19:4, 31; 2 Chr 34:9; Ezra 9:14; Isa 14:30)⁴¹⁴ – all designate that which is left over after a war, after a time of testing, a disaster, or a period of apostasy.

While the concept of the remnant is very central to the prophetic texts, it has a special significance in the book of Isaiah. For Isaiah, the remnant is (1) a small group who shall survive the invasions of the Assyrians (Isa 10:20-22), and (2) promised to be returned back to the Land by *Yahweh* (Isa 11:11-16). Thus, the remnant is the remainder of the people of the kingdom of Judah who survive impending judgment and become the origin or seed of the people of God. This development was also taken up by other prophets (cf: Mic 2:12; 4:7; 5:7, 8; 7:18; Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2; Zech 8:6; Joel 2:32), and post-

⁴¹¹ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 19. Wolff equates the people in general with the remnant People = remnant (a) Wolff; the general reference to “people” (Hag 1:2, 12, 13) refer to the *‘golah’* whom he equates with the ‘remnant’ in v12 and 14. Wolff, *Haggai*, 40-41.

⁴¹² “יָתֵר” in *BDB*, 451.

⁴¹³ “שְׁאֵר” in *BDB*, 983.

⁴¹⁴ “שְׁאֲרִית” in *BDB*, 984.

exilic biblical literature such as Ezra-Nehemiah, which describes the return of such a people from the Babylonian exile (Ezra 2).

Alternatively, others believe that the remnant simply refers to the people in general as opposed to the leaders. Petersen sees the people synonymously with the remnant and sees no reason for any distinction to be made. The occurrence of both in Hag 1:12 should not be problematic as the latter is a general reference to the people as different from the leaders.⁴¹⁵ Meyers and Meyers sees the concept of remnant as a simple designation of prophet's audience. Although Zechariah's usage may have influenced the compiling of Haggai, Haggai does not make a distinction between segments of the Yehudite population.⁴¹⁶

So by definition, we have a certain understanding of the remnant in the post-exilic era, and as we have seen, we can take note that the concept in its various applications is understood on different levels. First, historically, it refers simply to those who are left after major disaster (such events are familiar in the history of *Yahweh's* people) with the most defining being the period in exile and the return as a minority in to the province of Yehud. Theologically, this remnant are considered as those who remain faithful to *Yahweh* despite the challenges they faced. Given the eschatological nature of the Zerubbabel section that concludes the book of Haggai (Hag 2:20-23), the remnant from an eschatological point of view is also worth a mention here. First, this future remnant shall be a source of blessings and not a curse as before (Zech 8:11-13). Second, a shift from the historical notion where the remnant is not defined as the returnees from exile, but rather those who are faithful to *Yahweh* and thus will survive

⁴¹⁵ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 47. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 22.

⁴¹⁶ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 34.

the coming wrath (Mal 3:16-8). The question now is the identity of this remnant according to Haggai.

The book of Haggai employs שְׂאֲרֵי "rest, residue, remnant" to represent the remnant in his account (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2). A very strong claim is that the remnant consisted of those who returned from exile. For Wolff the remnant refer to those who escaped the deportations (2 Kgs 19:31; Ezra 9:14; 2 Chr 36:20) and was later used to refer to the *golah* (Neh 7:71; Mic 7:18; Jer 44:28; Zech 8:6, 11f). For Wolff, it is the sons from the *golah* who are the builders of the new temple (Ezra 3:8; 4:1; 6:16). The remnant referred to those descending from the prominent families of Judah who went into exile.⁴¹⁷ This claim can also find support in a reference Haggai makes towards another remnant that passively exists in the text. In Hag 2:3; Haggai refers to those taken into exile who have not died but still remember the beauty of the pre-exilic temple.

The discussion of other designations to follow will continue to raise further questions regarding this discussion of the identity of the people in Haggai. However, we leave this discussion with the following observations and questions. With regards to the make-up of the remnant, do we understand remnant as the historically exclusive, i.e. where it appears physically impossible for an outsider to become part of the remnant? Or is the Haggai remnant more theologically inclusive as the opportunity is there for others to join? In other words, is the remnant strictly, *golah* or the general populace as some have argued?

⁴¹⁷ Wolff, *Haggai*, 51-52.

People of the Land

Whilst the remnant of the people is the favoured designation for Haggai, the concept of the עַם הָאֶרֶץ “[the] people of the land” – despite its sole occurrence in Hag 2:4 – may have serious bearings on our discussion. In general, the history of the concept shows that it alternately portrayed positive and negative connotations, i.e. to one extreme, they are considered a group who owned land, were responsible citizens and who were very influential especially in judicial matters. We see in these pre-exilic times that the people of the land clearly had social, economic, political, and religious significance (2 Kgs 11:4-20; 21:24; Jer 34:1, 18-20, Ezek 22:29). They are also partially responsible for the revolt against Babylon which eventually led to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E (2 Kgs 25:18-21), a portrayal in which they are dangerous and a threat to their enemies.

On the more negative front, the people of the land are also portrayed as the poor of the land; they are merely the commoners of the society who were not carried into captivity but remained in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:14; 25:12). Note also that upon the return of the exiles, they separated themselves from the people of the land by referring to themselves as the people of Judah (Ezra 4:4, 10:2, 11; Neh 10:28-31). The phrase referred to those who discouraged the people of Yehud and their work (Ezra 3:3, 4:4).⁴¹⁸ Furthermore, the plural form “peoples of the lands” referred to those in the land with illegitimate religious practices (Ezra 3:3, 9:1, 2, 11; Neh 9:30, 10:29), and as outsiders (2 Chr 13:9, 32:13). The Chronicler portrays the people as the common people (2 Chr 23:13, 20, 21; 26:21; 33:25; 36:1).

⁴¹⁸ Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 26-30.

It is not an easy task to determine which people are being referred to every time the concept appears in the Bible (very common in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles: see also Gen 23:7; Exo 5:5; Lev 20:2; Num 14:9; Zech 7:5; Dan 9:6). It is obvious that the expression had changed in meaning in its history, i.e. while initially referring to those in the upper class (2 Kgs 11:14ff; 21:24; 23:30), the low perspective of the people of the land was very strong in postexilic times.⁴¹⁹ What can be noted however, is that despite the negativity that surrounds the people of the land in general, their influence in society cannot be classified as insignificant. The fact that there were those who were concerned about their effect on society – be it positive or negative – exposes this fundamental truth about the people of the land, i.e. they were a group who were seen to be influential.

One of the reasons why they were influential may be due to the fact that regardless of their hierarchical status, some believed that they were all landowners. Furthermore, it would definitely be in their best interests to be concerned with the government and its policies, especially with regards to the protection and ownership of land. Von Rad refers to the people of the land as peasant proprietors and credits them with the reforms under Joash (2 Kgs 11:13-18) and Josiah (2 Kgs 21:24). Here they are seen as being the principal support of national independence with all its religious implications.⁴²⁰

Returning to our main focus in the book of Haggai, some arguments fall under the various probable identities we have mentioned. However, more appealing to this work is the view of Meyers and Meyers who believe that the Haggai reference does not reflect

⁴¹⁹ Wolff, *Haggai*, 78.

⁴²⁰ Gerhard Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, Studies in Biblical Theology Issue 9 (London: SCM Press, 1953), 63-66.

a segment of people but rather the general populace; i.e. landowners and citizens with full rights.⁴²¹ At the beginning of the various oracles the hierarchical pattern emphasizes the difference between the leaders of the community and the community itself in terms of the people. The point is that the Haggai text appears to be more concerned with projecting the image of the former than the latter. If this is so, then the possibility here is that the Haggai usage of the expression denotes its original meaning where the people are identified in terms of their land on which they dwell. This then portrays a different make-up from the more common post-exilic negative use as the determining factor which identifies the Haggai reference is the land of Yehud as opposed to the non-exilic experience of those who remained in Judah. If we are to follow our line of thought that Haggai is referencing the general populace in contrast to the leaders, this expression is still problematic. Although there is a probability that it sympathizes with the general populace argument, the question would be: was it still required? Were not the other references to the people sufficient to make this point?

Petersen believes that this may indicate signs of the Chronicler's influence, in other words, it may have been an editorial inclusion.⁴²² This would be a valid argument given the exclusive nature in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, and even the works of the Chronicler. However, as we have mentioned earlier, Ezra-Nehemiah's platform for exclusiveness was heavily based on illegitimate religious practices (Ezra 3:3, 9:1, 2, 11; Neh 9:30, 10:29), while the Chronicler's was based on the notion of "other," i.e. "other lands," – other than Yehud (2 Chr 13:9, 32:13). In addition, the Chronicler also portrays the people as the common people (2 Chr 23:13, 20, 21; 26:21; 33:25; 36:1).

⁴²¹ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 50.

⁴²² Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 65.

So, the inclusion of the expression of the “people of the land” appears to be an editorial addition. Although it may reflect the ideals of contemporary literature regarding the concept, it does not necessarily translate and reflect an accurate social image due to the discrepancies noted. However, this study upholds the view that the people of the land were more likely the peasant landowners.

People and Nation

Not too much can be said about this expression *הָעָם-הַזֶּה וְכָל-הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה* “...*this people and all of this nation...*” (Hag 2:14). Its parallel function in the text means it is considered synonymous, so the following discussion will briefly dwell on the possible identity. The initial view by Rothstein argues that the identity of those in Hag 2:14 are the Samaritans, on the basis of the reports in the book of Ezra (Ezra 4:1-5). However, many have identified with Koch’s counter argument, adding further proposals. Meyers and Meyers argue that the “nation” here referred to the Yehudites.⁴²³ Petersen also challenges the Rothstein view while in support Cody proposes that *גּוֹי* “*nation*” describes *Yahweh’s* own people. Furthermore, when *גּוֹי* is used it normally implies political power and possession of land, while *עָם* “*people*” on the other hand refers occasionally to social or covenantal relations of the Yehud community.⁴²⁴

In general, Rothstein’s argument has been countered by many and the notion of Samaritans being the preferred people in Hag 2:14 is unconvincing. To follow our argument thus far, it would be difficult to believe that there was an opening which may

⁴²³ Meyers & Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 57. See also Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 27-29. Herbert G. May “‘This People’ and ‘This Nation’ in Haggai.” *Vetus Testamentum* 18, no. 2 (April 1968): 190-97.

⁴²⁴ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 79-81.

have made it possible for the Samaritans to be part of the general populace in contrast to their leaders.

First is the understanding that while remnant of the people may have been Haggai's preferred expression, its ambiguity offers a number of possible interpretations: the physical remnant who historically returned from exile, while on a more religious level the remnant had more of an eschatological reference, i.e. the basis of being included in the remnant was obedience to *Yahweh* and His laws. We were also introduced to the exclusiveness of the one and the other, i.e. the historical has no hope for the other, while religious remnant was open to all who obeyed *Yahweh*. Furthermore, others have argued that the remnant are the general populace in contrast to the leaders, and as this falls in line with the religious notion of the expression, we have also supported this identity for the Haggai reference for people. From the people of the land discussion, the general populace is also considered despite its problematic nature.

Like Redditt, our reference to the general populace is the entire Yehud population in contrast to the pre-exilic Judah and Jerusalem.⁴²⁵ Thus, in contrast to the leading group or class, the people represent the lower class or peasant community. For Weinberg, peasant members of the community were composed of, firstly, the people of the land or rather those who remained in Judah during the exile who have accepted the return of the elites and agreed to their terms for life in the society; and secondly, members of the returning community who were initially landowners themselves, but whose economic status had deteriorated to the state of selling themselves and their families as slaves.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 22.

⁴²⁶ Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 26-30.

Summary

Once again the task here within the Jamesonian framework deals with social class and ideologies. At the outset of this chapter we identified three ideologemes in the royal, imperial and familial ideals. While the dominant ideal is the imperial, the familial ideal shows only glimpses in the text. Although the royal ideal is also a strong ideal, it remains in the shadows of the more dominant imperial ideal. Returning to the text we are given clear images of the following conclusions: first, the temple is the overarching theme in the text; second, the temple functions as the ultimate criterion by which one is judged as having honor and no honor; third, it is clear that the opposing opinions with regards to the temple are that of the leaders and that of the people.

Clearly, all three ideals have individual interests in relation to the temple. Although they may seem to agree regarding the importance of the temple, the respective agendas are not necessarily all fulfilled at one time. We see that the imperial mindset would definitely embrace the temple and its operating functions. The family-oriented ideal accepts the spiritual importance of the temple in their lives; however, there is a sense that the temple will always play second fiddle to the caring for families and local communities. The royal interest on the other hand appears undecided, or rather torn between pro and anti-temple positions. Whilst we are aware of a usually harmonious collaboration between the king and the temple in pre-exilic Judah and Israel, there is no real clear perspective of such royal relations with the temple.

On the issue of social class between the ruling and ruled classes, we can make the following observation: first the conflict itself may initially be understood in terms of a Marxist conflict theory; second, Weber's development has allowed us to delve into

conflicts within the same class or group, i.e. in our case the leading group. Amongst this group, we may see the institutions of the priesthood, prophets, monarchy – supposedly intertwined with the office of governor – and elders as the leaders.

All of these leaders had important roles within their respective areas, but it is the office of the high priest and the priesthood in my opinion which is very influential and emerges at the top of the leadership hierarchy. First, the temple was a very important element in imperial plans. Second, the priesthood was now more emphatic concerning their additional roles outside of the religious, i.e. in political and economic areas. Third, while the office of the Persian governor may have boasted equal authority, the governor's influence definitely did not go beyond the boundaries of Yehud, especially to provinces under other governors as this authority was reserved only for the satrap of Beyond the River. The high priest's influence on the other hand, possibly went beyond given the dispersed situation of the Jewish people who were still loyal to *Yahweh* and the temple in Jerusalem. The office of the high priest would have definitely strived to maintain the status quo by ensuring that Persian interests were satisfied. In a way their ideals portray the two sides of a coin. This is evident also in the text with the dominating imperial concerns but also a strong presence of priestly language.

On the opposing side, all other leaders may have had their own agenda to contradict the high priest's authority. First, the governor may find himself in the same boat with the high priest; they were in a privileged position, so why rock the boat and risk everything by displeasing the imperial rule? Whilst there may be signs of power struggle between these two prominent offices, it is very likely that collaboration to serve the imperial rule would best serve both their offices. Second, the prophets without the authority of the monarch were always going to struggle. Despite their best efforts

through their words and oracles, their effect may have been nullified or rather reinterpreted by high authorities, as is evident in the way the prose form incorporates the poetic sections and the prophet's words for its own agenda. Third, the elders, as noted, are pro-Davidic and would probably be represented by the strong royal undertone in the text. In saying that, the familial glimpses would be associated with the people and families in general, which is therefore a major element in the elders' make-up. Thus it is clear how the one group can be torn between two ideological perspectives. In this case, as individual leaders of families and the community in their collective, it would be in the best interests of the elders to empathize with the imperial ideals and to collaborate with the high priest, on the other hand, it is these very ideals that undermine their authority and bring disadvantage to their families and people in general.

The next chapter deals with the economic side of the discussion which for Marx is the determining factor of social-political stances and struggles in society.

Chapter Four

Horizon Three – The Historical Phase

The third horizon / historical phase concludes the interpretational process and deals specifically with “modes of production.” To reiterate our discussion on theory, this phase now deals with the widest of interpretive contexts, i.e. history. Note once again that by history, we are concerned with the vaster movement of socio-economic epochs, or in Marxist terms, modes of production. Given their scale, they are of necessity abstract, yet we cannot understand what takes place on a smaller more scale without them. History can also be said to appear in the other two phases: in the first, it is in terms of local acts; in the second, it concerns the dynamics of class conflict. In other words, unlike the accessible nature of the interpretive text in the first phase, interpretation of the historical context is at the most speculative due to the inaccessible nature of history. However, interpretation is not at all a lost cause for despite the abstract status of this final phase, the analysis of the first two phases – especially the social discussions of the second phase – gives the speculations of the final phase a sense of credibility and authenticity.⁴²⁷ For this phase, the discussion on form and structure is revived but interpreted differently from that in the first phase. For both Jameson and Boer, these elements now represent a unit of study that transcends the more constricted focus of

⁴²⁷ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 79.

the political phase one – which concerns the symbolic act – and the social phase two – which concerns class discourse and ideologemes – i.e. modes of production.⁴²⁸

For this phase, I will follow Boer's slight modification to the normal order by commencing with the discussion of the base and concluding with the superstructure and the interpretation. This sequence makes the discussion much easier to follow as we commence by discussing the dominant elements and then move along to find traces of the dominated and the contradicting perspectives. At the base level, we shall identify the dominant mode of production while the superstructure section will focus on traces or figures of modes of production. The concluding interpretive stage focuses on contradictions between the modes of productions.

1. Base

Modes of production understood in terms of non-synchronous development and periods. History as absent cause.⁴²⁹

In relation to our earlier discussions, we have identified the dominating presence of the imperial ideal and culture in the text. In regards to the historical context, not only is the early years of the Persian imperial rule evident in the text, but there is also a general consensus that the compilation date of the book of Haggai is presumed to follow closely the events described in the book.⁴³⁰ We can now move to discuss confidently the Persian period as the era evident in the text but also the era in which those responsible for the compilation lived.⁴³¹ The widely accepted view of the economy-type in the

⁴²⁸ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 79. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 88-89.

⁴²⁹ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

⁴³⁰ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, xlv – xlviii.

⁴³¹ Yee's discussion on the book of Judges exposes the dilemma of the difference between the era described in the text and that of the authors. For Yee, the different periods also represent two

province of Yehud is the 'agrarian.' The strong presence of the agricultural vernacular may also attest to this (Hag 1:6-11, 2:11-12, 16-17, 19). Here, the vast majority were employed in farming activities and almost the entire wealth of the economy derived from work on the land. Other sources of wealth such as trading were considered secondary.⁴³² Societies in the Persian era all operated and functioned under the "Asiatic Mode of Production"⁴³³ which is also known as the "Tributary mode of production." The latter will be the preferred term for this work.⁴³⁴ While the focus of this subsection is the identification of the dominant mode of production, it will be important that we deviate slightly to discuss the cultural environment from which it emerged.

1.1. Cultural Transformation

If there ever was a perfect era to identify transformations within any culture, the exilic and post-exilic era would be it for the Yehud province. The returnees would probably qualify as living proof of such transformations especially given change in geographical location, living in their current culture which is very much tainted with imperial interests, while at the same time still showing glimpses of a culture in the past which only a few people can really boast to have truly known. Politically, although they were relocated back in their homeland, they remained under Persian authority. They had no monarch on the throne of Yehud and were no longer independent. They were now living like captives within their own homes. Socially, the returnees were the

different modes of production which were dominant within the respective eras. Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body," 152-153.

⁴³² Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 202-208. The entire peasant class depended on the working and cultivation of land, although some amongst the elite made profits through trading, it was a norm in practice that investments were made in land and agricultural activities rather than in merchant trading.

⁴³³ Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 191-192.

⁴³⁴ The preference of the term "Tributary" is merely to assist in discussing a conflict with the "native tributary" mode of production later on.

minority and were outnumbered by those who remained in the land. Furthermore, they were faced with an identity crisis, especially with the struggle to define the true people of *Yahweh* and of the land of Yehud. From an economic standpoint, their local economy was now only a part of the greater Persian economy. On the religious front, not only was the temple controlled by the Persian king but the status of the High Priest, in particular, had climbed to the top of the local leader's hierarchy.

Taking into consideration the text of Haggai, it would be difficult to argue against the dominant presence of religion from a cultural perspective. The first point is that religion dominates the content. The religious institution of the temple is at the centre of attention and discussion. In addition, the content also describes *Yahweh's* message for his people through the prophet Haggai. From a historical point of view, it is obvious with the Persian interests invested on the temple that religion may have been the main vessel which assisted the imperial rule to achieve its goals. In saying that, the cultural backdrop to which the tributary mode of production is dominant is religion.

While there may have been many aspects of the religion which were transformed, the transformation appears to be at the core of the religious identity crisis faced by the Jewish people. The following observations will enlighten us regarding the struggles faced by the Jewish communities in general.

... the ability of a group to reconstruct its identity is essential to its survival in a foreign cultural environment ... the social forms that a minority, exiled, or refugee community creates can be a result not of a desperate attempt to cling to pointless and antiquated traditions from a previous era or homeland, but rather a creative construction of a "culture of resistance" that preserves group solidarity and cultural identity.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ Daniel L. Smith, "The Politics of Ezra: Sociological Indicators of Postexilic Judaeon Society" in *STS 1*, ed. Phillip R. Davies (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 84. See also R. K. Menton, "Intermarriage and

First, the threat to the identity of a minority group, according to Smith, is due to the foreign influences coming from the dominant group(s); thus the formulating of a certain identity is a form of resistance to the dominant group(s). Second, another contributing factor to the crisis is the diaspora and the pattern of moving from a centralized position to being decentralized geographically.⁴³⁶ Diaspora was not a reality unique to the Jewish people, an element which was possibly unique to the Jewish communities was a consistent “broad-based” desire and longing to return to their homeland. Attached to this geographical restoration was a complete restoration of their identities as Jews.⁴³⁷

...the tension between the wish to maintain a Jewish identity in a non-Jewish environment while at the same time striving to express some sort of ‘local patriotism’ and sense of ‘belonging’ within that very same environment...⁴³⁸

To re-phrase in a question: how was it possible to maintain Jewish identity without totally denying the cultures of their adopted homes? Barclay believes that the problem lay not in the maintaining of Jewish identity, but with practices associated with identity in their adapted environments. It was the separatist attitude of the Jewish against the non-Jews which created a hostile environment.⁴³⁹

the Social Structure: Fact and Theory,” *Psychiatry* 9 (1941), 368. E. L. Cerroni-Long argues that when a human group finds itself uprooted, isolated and faced by a strong pressure to conform to alien standards, it instinctively falls back on the primary ties of the kinship networks both to reaffirm its individuality in the face of threats of extinction, and to maintain some form of normal existence amidst unforeseeable and stressful contingencies.—Cerroni-Long, “Marrying Out: Socio-Cultural and Psychological Implications of Inter-marriage,” *JCS* 15 (1984), 25-46.

⁴³⁶ We may also note that the Persian administration utilized the decentralized method by allowing their subjects to return to their homes to work their lands and pay tribute to the imperial rule.

⁴³⁷ Isaiah M. Gafini, *Land, Centre and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity*, JSOTSup, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Lester L. Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 12.

⁴³⁸ Gafini, *Land, Centre and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity*, 41.

⁴³⁹ John M. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 444.

Another major impact of the *diaspora* was the need for a more decentralized mindset and perception towards the Jewish cult and its institutions. The idea of a central place of worship is quite visible in the life of the Israelites. While there are glimpses that the idea was already part of early Israelite life and thinking (Exod 29:43, Josh 18:1, 1 Kgs 8:16), it is the monarchic era with the establishment of the Solomonic temple where this centralized sanctuary is strongly presented. Most notably, the reforms of king Josiah are seen as an official attempt to centralize worship with the destruction of the altars and high places (2 Kgs 22-23).⁴⁴⁰ Without having to delve into the ideological debate regarding Josiah and the book of Deuteronomy,⁴⁴¹ centralization of the cult is one of the major themes in the book (Deut 12:5).⁴⁴² For the people of Israel, this was the *Yahweh's* dwelling place and the only place where they were to meet *Yahweh*. So it is understandable why the temple occupied a very unique place in the hearts of the people.

We note that any system has its benefits and disadvantages and while a centralized system may promote unity and solidarity, it also meant a centralizing of authority.⁴⁴³ Therefore, while the centralizing idea may have been dominant in the lives

⁴⁴⁰ According to Harper, the first attempt to centralize worship is during the reign of Hezekiah (725–696BCE) before the later well-known reforms of Josiah (639–609BCE). The first attempt failed and was not sustained following the death of the king, mainly because the concept had only been discussed in the latter part of the king's life. - Andrew Harper, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, ICC, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), 20-21.

⁴⁴¹ What was believed to have been found in the temple is not the entire book of Deuteronomy as we have it today but rather chapters 1-26. W. M. L. De Wette proposed the Josianic dating of the book of Deuteronomy based on the close association of the book of Deuteronomy and Josiah's reforms. This dating has been accepted by the majority, although it has been debated whether the book "influenced" or "was influenced" by the reforms. Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPSTC, ed. Nahum M. Sarna, Chaim Potok (Philadelphia/Jerusalem: JPS, 1996), xx.

⁴⁴² Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, OTL, trans. Dorothea Barton (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 16-18. Yairah Amit notes "centralization of worship" as the main ideology of the book of Deuteronomy. —Amit, *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*, trans. Yael Lotan (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 50. Ernest Nicholson, "The Centralization of the Cult in Deuteronomy," in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol.13. No.4 (Oct 1963), 380.

⁴⁴³ Tigay discusses arguments that the issue of centralization since the days of Josiah was always an issue of ultimate control under the monarch. —*Deuteronomy*, 459-464. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament*, 375.

of the people, a decentralized line of thinking would always resurface, especially when the specific conditions and situations do not work well within the centralized way of life. The *diaspora* as mentioned was a major challenge to this line of thought and decentralizing the cult was necessary to accommodate the Jewish situation. Soggins deemed it impractical for people far away to take the risky journey to the central place. The sensible approach would be to set up cultic institutions within their local settlements.⁴⁴⁴ Upon saying this, decentralized worship should not be seen as the replacing of the centralized norm but rather a higher form of the latter. A Talmudic statement cited by Bakon clearly shows a re-interpretation of central worship in which it has become more spiritual in nature rather than the physical norm. Those outside of Palestine could now worship facing towards the land of Israel while those within Palestine would be facing Jerusalem.⁴⁴⁵

On the religious front, the temple's connection with the people was physically affected by the diaspora. While it may have remained a centralized place of worship in spirit, it was physically impractical. In terms of the temple's administrative and economical functions, it was no longer the centre but merely one of many centres under the Persian decentered form of administration.

1.2. Tributary Mode of Production

Gottwald distinguishes three types of modes of production in ancient Israel, each having its own defining period of dominance in Israel's history. First is the

⁴⁴⁴ J. Alberto Soggins sees this as the main reason for the emergence of the local synagogues which continued to exist in the time of Jesus. The synagogue represented a form of de-centralizing of the temple traditions —Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, second edition, trans. John Bowden (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1993), 296.

⁴⁴⁵ Shimon Bakon, "Centralization of Worship," in *The Jewish Bible Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.1 (1998), 31-33.

communitarian mode of production which was the preferred system in pre-monarchic Israel during the tribal era. Second, was the tributary mode of production which was dominant from the beginning of the monarchy to the Hellenistic era. Third was the slave mode of production which dominated from the Hellenistic to the Roman period.⁴⁴⁶

Since the book of Haggai is associated with the Persian era, the economic discussion of this chapter focuses on the first two modes of production. A more detailed discussion of the communitarian mode of production will follow in the last section, but the immediate focus is the tributary mode of production. Gottwald breaks down the tributary mode of production into two phases: a native tributary phase when Israel enjoyed political independence and a foreign tributary stage when Israel was colonially subject to foreign powers.⁴⁴⁷ The discussion of tension and conflicts between these systems shall conclude this chapter but now the focus will be to elaborate on general but important elements of the tributary mode of production.

The tributary mode of production presupposes the basis of production within villages where the majority of the farmers would work the lands by means of their own labor and that of their families. Under this system, the farmers practically labored for two reasons to feed the family and pay the required government taxes.⁴⁴⁸ The main discussion points that follow concerns labor, taxes and land tenure.

Land tenure in Yehud during the Persian rule is a topic concerning which there is much debate. While others argue that land was under the sole authority of the

⁴⁴⁶ Norman K. Gottwald, "Sociology," in *ABD*, Ed. David N Freedman (New York / London / Toronto / Sydney / Auckland: Doubleday, 1992), 79-99.

⁴⁴⁷ Gottwald, "Sociology," 79-99.

⁴⁴⁸ Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 191. Jack Pastor, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 1. Jairus Banaji, *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation*, Historical Materialism Book Series, Vol. 25, eds. Paul Blackledge, Sebastian Budgen (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 354-356.

imperial rulers, an alternative understanding argues that the lands belonged to individual landowners within the local communities. Although Weinberg's thesis may be more communal in nature, it is still suggestive of the alternative argument. For Weinberg, the land was the possession of the temple-citizens and these citizens were the aristocratic community who had returned from exile, as well as others⁴⁴⁹ who believed that the temple did in fact own land that initially belonged to small landowners. If we are to reconsider earlier discussions and the claim for a semiautonomous status in Judah, then it is very likely that both arguments contain some truth. It is very likely that the Persian authorities had over-seeing control. The possibility remains that the aristocrats had experienced a glimpse of autonomy, but even then, to what extent the local people may have felt and exercised autonomy remains unclear. On their part, it would be reasonable to remain on the good side of the imperial authorities whose support in their endeavors was strongly required.

The influence and authority of the imperial rule are attested to with the resettlements of the peoples as well as the presence of the garrisons⁴⁵⁰ distributed all over Yehud. From an archaeological perspective, Hoglund discusses the practice of "Ruralization" – which is the decentralizing of a population towards the rural areas – as an imperial ploy to achieve its political and economic goals. As an imperial initiative, two factors can be considered: the first is the fact that there seemed to be a lack of resettlement in the traditional villages of the pre-exilic times.⁴⁵¹ The second is the fact

⁴⁴⁹ Peter R. Bedford, "The Economy of the Near East in the First Millennium BC" in *The Ancient Economy*, ed. J. G. Manning, Ian Morris (California: Stanford University Press, 2007), 80-81.

⁴⁵⁰ Although garrisons may have been made up of the local peoples, they were still under the commands of Persian elites upholding the top offices in the military ranks. The existence of garrisons also ensures the loyalty of the peoples to the economic terms and conditions of the Persian government.

⁴⁵¹ As discussed, the handling of land distribution was carried out by means of a central authority. Most of the settlements—discovered through archaeological work—testify that the decisions of choosing the areas was most likely that of the imperial rule. Should it have been the decision of the

that the move to the rural areas is shown to have happened all at one time, occurring during the time of the first return. The movement does not occur in a chronological manner within the Persian era. Indications of such a process would be first, that the land remained under imperial authority, and, second, that such settlements would also be effective for a successful tributary system—with an increase of agrarian produce.⁴⁵² Closely associated with the purposes of ruralization is the employment of a method referred to as “ethnic collectivization,” which entailed the forming of units consisting of ethnic groups to settle and work Imperial lands. Although these ethnic distinctions emerged only under the Persian rule, the practice and the principle itself of forming units was already found in previous empires. Like ruralization, it ensured that the fruits of labor would be subject to the landowner. Second, this further implies that the people had rights to the land as long as they maintained allegiance to the imperial demands.⁴⁵³

The people may have been free to live and work the lands but their activities would have been monitored. Note also that whether they owned or rented the land, it would not escape the fact that they remained to labor for the benefit of the imperial rule. Thus, rights to land and its usufruct would be granted as a form of tenure, subject to terms of loyalty and at times payment.

Labour is another important aspect of the tributary mode of production. As mentioned earlier, the labor was provided entirely by the farmer and his family. It is

people, it is assumed that more likely they would have returned to the traditional villages, which in reality is not the case. Most scholars also agree that large estates within the provinces were given to Persian aristocrats by the king himself.

⁴⁵² Kenneth Hoglund, “The Achaemenid Context,” in *Second Temple Studies* 1, JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991): 57-60. See also Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 203-204.

⁴⁵³ Hoglund, “The Achaemenid Context,” 65-66.

evident that a vital element to the labor force is the family unit or household.⁴⁵⁴ A brief but important discussion of these households and their contributions to the economy will be beneficial to understanding the various challenges and struggles they face respectively. Faust discusses the two main households which are geographically determined, i.e. the urban and the rural households.⁴⁵⁵

The urban household was made of mainly the nuclear family that normally dwelt in small structures and houses. Only a minority of the urban families appeared to have larger structures for living conditions.⁴⁵⁶ These larger houses usually belonged to the wealthier families and these households tended to go beyond the nuclear and include the extended family members. Furthermore, archaeological studies claim that olive or wine pressing was the norm for work and usually found in larger urban households. In terms of labor, these wine or olive presses were operated by the families with the assistance of hired labor. Moreover, we see that these urban families – whether it be large or small – were not part of a larger economic group but were rather independent players in the face of the state economy.⁴⁵⁷

The rural household, on the other hand, was made up primarily of the extended family (*bet av*). They lived in large houses that were subdivided to possibly house many nuclear families who would also make up the labor force. Unlike the urban setting, agricultural production is not near the house but is more concentrated in an industrial

⁴⁵⁴ Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E.* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 291-292.

⁴⁵⁵ Avraham Faust, "Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel" in Yasur-Landau, Assaf, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow, *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) 257-273.

⁴⁵⁶ According to Faust, the larger household areas doubled the size of the small, i.e. 40-70 compared to 110-160 square metres.

⁴⁵⁷ Faust, "Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel," 257-262.

area where the production of olive oil and crops, and animal farming operated at a larger scale. For Faust, the rural households were operating under the traditional Israelite lineage economic system (*mispahah*).⁴⁵⁸ The lineage was a larger organization body that worked in the area incorporating in it many families. Also evident in the rural system were storage facilities where excess for the family was stored in the individual houses while produce that belonged to the lineage – most probably intended to pay taxes – was placed in a communal storage place. Upon saying that, it appears that the individual families did not necessarily deal directly with the government or the state market as it would have been the responsibility of the lineage organization. In other words, the lineage functioned as a form of mediator between the family and state.⁴⁵⁹

So far, we are able to distinguish three types of economic systems based on the household. The “private economy” would be the appropriate reference for the families – whether nuclear or extended – who functioned autonomously in the economy, most of which may be attributed to the urban households. On the other hand, the “lineage economy” referred to a larger association which integrated numerous extended families. It does emerge, however, that both urban and rural households were part of a larger economic system; i.e. “state economy” or “royal economy” – as it is headed by a monarch. Being operated by the state, this economic system focussed on four major areas, production, collection of produce, storage, and trade.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ The term *mispahah/mishpahah* has been used synonymously with the term *shevet* to refer to tribes as a major entity in Israel. Gottwald discusses the biblical transformation of the tribe of Dan to make a certain distinction the terms. *Mispahah/miaspahah* is rather a small unit within the *shevet* but larger than a *bet av*. – Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 245-270.

⁴⁵⁹ Faust, “Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel,” 262-266.

⁴⁶⁰ Faust, “Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel,” 267-271.

A royal system for production is where large centres – expected to produce large quantities every season – were located in the peripheries of the urban areas.⁴⁶¹ Royal storage would be difficult to maintain in rural remote areas; furthermore, protection would have been needed from the rural farmers from which the product was taken from in the first place. Therefore, it is highly probable that none of these rural storages can be attributed to the state. Also evident was a series of buildings that surrounded these sites believed to have been either forts or estates. Regardless of their use, it is obvious that they functioned to serve royal purposes near production. The second focus is a royal system of produce collection which is evident in epigraphic finds but also hinted through organized storage facilities. This leads to the third focus which is the royal system of storage. The final focus is the royal system of trade regulation.⁴⁶²

It is now easier to comprehend the impact each form of household had on the economy and vice versa, as well as – and more importantly – an insight to its operations in terms of the labour force. It is clear in our discussion that the main source of labour is family grounded, at least for the lineage system. While the same can be said about the urban households of the private economy, hired labour was also a common feature. The state economy, on the other hand, would be dependent on hired labour to operate the large state economic centres, especially in the four major areas noted above.⁴⁶³ In addition, the state would also benefit from the labours of the lineage and private economies, i.e. through taxation and corvee.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶¹ An example of this is a discovery of a royal centre south of Jerusalem which was estimated to have produced 150000 – 200000 litres of wine every season. Faust, "Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel," 267.

⁴⁶² Faust, "Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel," 267-271.

⁴⁶³ Boer discusses this form of labor in detail under the term "estate labor." – *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel*, 118-121.

⁴⁶⁴ Faust, "Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel," 271-273.

Taxes and tithes are a very central element of the tributary mode of production.

As a working definition, we shall consider Elon's explanation of taxation;

...tax is a compulsory payment, in currency or in specie, exacted by public authority, for the purpose of satisfying the latter's own needs or those of the public, or part of the public⁴⁶⁵

While this definition may be easy to understand, our focus at this point is on the various ways in which the tax is collected by the authorities. The first point regarding taxes in ancient Israel is the great difficulty in trying to distinguish between state and religious taxes.⁴⁶⁶ As we have seen in the earlier discussions on the temple's relations with the royal courts, there would definitely be overlapping responsibilities, or rather, unclear boundaries between the matters of the state and religion. This point is related to discussions of class in the previous chapter, with the close association of the priesthood and the political and economic concerns of Yehud. The second point requiring our attention concerns the various forms of taxation. In Oden's discussion, almost any process that results with one gaining revenue at the expense of another is considered tax. Oden discusses various forms of offerings made to either the state or the temple, into which we shall not delve in any detail, with the exception of the following which has great bearing on our work; i.e. royal taxation, tithes, and forced labor.⁴⁶⁷

While the existence of a royal taxation system is evident during the rule of David (1 Sam 30:20; 2 Sam 20:24), we do find within the Solomon narrative an official basis for the practice (1 Kgs 4:7-19). One major presupposition of this system is the understanding that kings were large landowners who increased their personal

⁴⁶⁵ Menachem Elon, "Taxation," in Menachem Elon, ed., *The Principles of Jewish Law* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975), 663.

⁴⁶⁶ Robert A. Oden Jr, "Taxation in Biblical Israel" in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 1984), 164.

⁴⁶⁷ Oden Jr, "Taxation in Biblical Israel" 165-171.

possessions during their reigns. Under Solomon, the land was divided into twelve districts, each with royal officials to ensure that each district provided supplies for the king and his household for one month of the year. We must note here that such a system did have its flaws and the main debates concerned the fairness of the system towards each district, but also the question whether Judah may have been exempt from paying these taxes. This discussion shall be important for our later focus on the resistance towards the temple building and its implications.

Our focus is now on tithes which are believed to be a very productive form of revenue and taxes in ancient Israel. Initially, the tithe is “the tax representing 10 percent of the total produce of farming and cattle breeding,” whose main purpose was “the maintenance of the Temple and its personnel.”⁴⁶⁸ While the main tithing laws are attributed to Deuteronomistic and Priestly materials, the earliest reference to tithes in the Bible is when Abraham offers a tenth of his spoils from war to Melchizedek, the king of Salem and also a priest of the Most High God (Gen 14:17-20).⁴⁶⁹

Tithe as part of the Deuteronomistic legislation was associated with Josiah’s reforms in the seventh century BCE, while the priestly materials emerged later in the sixth century BCE in the postexilic era. As others have argued, a struggle between the king and Levites occurred over the claims to the tithe and taxes from the farmers. This struggle entails that these respective legislations also had separate ideological functions, which may prove useful to our discussion. One of the popular understandings behind

⁴⁶⁸ Oden Jr, “Taxation in Biblical Israel” 170. Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel*, 121. J. Christian Wilson, “Tithes,” in *ABD*, Vol. 6. Ed. David N Freedman (New York / London / Toronto / Sydney / Auckland: Doubleday, 1992), 581-582.

⁴⁶⁹ Wilson, “Tithes,” 581-582. Gary North, *Tithing and the Church* (Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994), ix – xi. A few examples of further references outside of the law codes of Deuteronomy and Leviticus are Gen 28:22; 1 Sam 8:15, 17; Amos 4:4, etc.

the Deuteronomistic law and Josiah's reforms is the intention to “centralize the cult” and with it everything else temple related, for example, tithes (Deut 14:22-29). Given the interwoven nature of the state and temple, the monarch definitely is one to benefit from the process.

This, however, is not the case for the Levitical priests, for the king's gain is their loss in terms of income; this would probably be a partial explanation for the provision for tithes to be given to the Levites on every third year (Deut 14:28-29). From a priestly perspective, the tithes belong to the Levites as payment for their services to the cult (Lev 27:30-33; Num 18:21-32). This notion may also be supported by an outsider's perspective in the form of the book of Nehemiah (Neh 10:33-40).⁴⁷⁰ Putting the debate aside, for now, the point is that the tithe was not a voluntary offering but a tax requirement.

While Elon's definition may fail to capture any form of political, social and economic tension associated with the practice of taxes and tithes, Boer's defining connection with the practice of plunder does. Plunder is defined as “the work of one's hand being appropriated by another through force”⁴⁷¹ which is essentially what tax and tribute are. The only difference is tax is achieved through more “sophisticated forms of covert violence.”⁴⁷² In other words, violence is issued out in a distorted manner so that it becomes acceptable to the general populace.

⁴⁷⁰ Oden Jr, “Taxation in Biblical Israel” 170-171.

⁴⁷¹ Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel*, 149.

⁴⁷² Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel*, 151.

Another form of taxation is “forced labor,” also known as “corvée labor” (*mas*).⁴⁷³ Once again, while David may have employed forced labor (2 Sam 20:24) in his time, it is in the Solomon narrative that the adaptation of such methods appear to intensify. We note that Solomon imposes forced labor on the whole of Israel, demanding 30,000 men to work on the preparations for the building of the temple (1 Kgs 5:13-14). We find that there is a contrasting view regarding the imposing of such methods on the native people (1 Kgs 9:20-22). However, one argument is that this contradictory passage emerged with an apologetic purpose to pardon Solomon from his actions. Despite the debate, what is undeniable is the fact that forced labor may have been at the very centre of the revolt against Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12).⁴⁷⁴ Already it is obvious that although the concept and practice of corvée may have been required, it definitely did not sit well with the people in general.

2. Superstructure

Focus on traces or “figures” of modes of production.⁴⁷⁵

Here the question of form returns, or rather, the discussion has moved to the ideology of form that is concerned with the contradictions and conflict of structures within the text. Furthermore, it concerns the continuous activity that occurs within the confines of the text. Figuration is “the way various forms represent their respective

⁴⁷³ It is noted that states in the Ancient Near East would impose corvée on the subjects in order to work on state projects. Walter J Houston, “Corvée in the Kingdom of Israel: Israelites, ‘Canaanites’, and Cultural Memory,” in *JSOT*, Vol 43.1 (2018), 30. This is known as “the going” which is *ilku* in Akkadian and *unusshe* in Hurrian. Igor M. Diakonoff, “Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine in the Third and Second Millennia B.C.” in Igor M. Diakonoff, *Early Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 297. In Hittite culture it is known as *luzzi*, - Grigorii G. Girogadze, “The Hittite Kingdom,” in Igor M. Diakonoff, *Early Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 280.

⁴⁷⁴ Oden Jr, “Taxation in Biblical Israel” 165-166.

⁴⁷⁵ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

modes of production.”⁴⁷⁶ In other words, figuration functions as the mediator between the base and superstructure, or between the modes of production and the text.

2.1. Figuration

While there may be numerous types of figurations, Boer mentions four types that are applicable to biblical analysis; i.e. generic discontinuity, sentence production, conceptual, and spatial. We commence with an element of generic discontinuity to lay a general platform for the discussion. We then focus in more detail on sentence analysis, while the other two shall also be utilized should the need arise.⁴⁷⁷

In terms of genre transformation, we discussed the dominating presence of the prose over the poetic and how a third genre appeared to mediate between the two but also develop into a genre in its own right. The “brief historical apologetic” is a confluence of conflicting genres,⁴⁷⁸ i.e. prose vs poetry. Formal and structural features as acknowledged in the first horizon are seen to bear their own distinctive ideological content; i.e. they are now economically centred in their representation.

We have already discussed the governing indicators of the tributary mode of production in the text; our task now is to identify any traces of subdued modes of production. In other words, we are now concerned with representations of conflicting modes of production, which for the text of Haggai is exposed in two ways – first is the

⁴⁷⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 80.

⁴⁷⁷ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 83.

⁴⁷⁸ Jameson argues that any one genre is a “confluence of conflicting genres.” This confluence can be understood as the figuration of the various modes of production. See Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 83. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 103-150.

existing royal undertone lurking in the shadow of the dominant imperial ideal, and second is the resistance to work on the temple which is the root problem in the text.

2.1.1. Trace 1: Royal Undertone

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is no real clarity as to the position the royal ideal takes in relation to the imperial and familial ideals. While the affiliation with the latter will follow later on, we are more concerned at present with its correlation with the imperial ideal in its capacity as the opposition. We commence by revisiting the book's superscription where a simple and visible order functions as our window into the administrative and economic structures of the Persian era.

Hag 1:1

בשנת שמיים לזרבינוש המלך בחדש הששי ביום אחד לחדש ה' דבר-יהוה בידי-חגי הנביא
אל-זרובבל בן-שאלתיאל פתח יהוה ואל-יהושע בן-יהוצדק הכהן הגדול לאמר

In the second year of king Darius, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by *the hand of the prophet Haggai* to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest saying;

We had already agreed that the author(s) deliberately listed the names in a hierarchical order⁴⁷⁹ and the listing of Darius before the local leaders of Yehud (Hag 1:1; 2:1) confirms at the outset the ruling authority. This image of Darius and the inferior leaders of Yehud also reveal a truth regarding the structural organization, or rather spatial representation on two levels. First, we have touched on the provincial system of satrapies implemented by the Persian rule where twenty satrapies are managed and

⁴⁷⁹ See discussion regarding Zerubbabel under "Royal Ideology" in chapter 3.

operated separately from each other but are all associated directly with the Persian centre and rule. From an imperial economic view, the flow of revenue through taxes or tributes is expected to move from the provinces to the Persian centre through the offices of the satraps.⁴⁸⁰

One real threat to this currency route appears in the form of the local leaders. It is here we see the breakdown of the imperial system as the local leaders – despite serving the interests of the imperial ruler – have their own agenda. We noted in the previous chapter the unclear relationship between the royal ideals and the temple. This could potentially be a representation of the tension between the local leaders and their imperial superiors.

On the second level, the statuses of the local leaders changed from being subject to imperial rule to being dominant in the local context. Just as taxes are important to the imperial state, they are also necessary for local government operations. In this light, the form of resistance now emerges from the local people which shall be discussed more in detail in the following section. At present, the main concern is rebellious elements embodied in the royal ideal and what they represent.

An additional manner in which traces of conflict show up is in references to past traditions, especially those relating to the monarchic era of Judah and Israel before the exile. To reiterate previous deliberations, we acknowledged the strong existence of royal language in the book. Other royal-related elements included the serious concentration

⁴⁸⁰ In his writings Herodotus records the divisions of the satrapies and the required tribute to be paid by each nation or subdivisions to the imperial authorities. Herodotus claims that Darius I fixed the amounts to be received from his subjects unlike the systems of his predecessors, Cyrus and Cambyses, who treated tributes as gifts and left the amounts open to the desire of the subject peoples. —Herodotus, 3.89. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 192.

placed on the Davidic throne through the person of Zerubbabel. Furthermore, we noted the clear absence of the king from a rhetorical perception which ideologically plays out in favour of the institution of the monarchy itself. In the context of the current section, these discussions now take on an additional function as traces of resistance against the imperial economic system.

We had also touched on the temple-building traditions close affiliation with the monarch in Hag 2:3;

Who in you (the one who) remain which saw this house in her former glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not (in comparison) like nothing in your eyes?

The common factor in all three rhetorical questions above is the temple. Haggai is addressing very old members of the community who had witnessed the Solomonic temple. Some argue that eye-witnesses to the Solomon temple would have been too old to make the journey back to Yehud.⁴⁸¹ However, we find that Ezra reports the emotional reactions of those making the comparison of the two temples (Ezra 3:12-13).⁴⁸² The second question in particular urges the people to assess the current situation of the temple, whereas first and third questions rhetorically connects what the temple was in the past and what it should be in the present. We do find here the existence of a yearning for things of the past as opposed to the present. Note also that these rhetorical questions hope to spark the people into action and work to rebuild the temple. From an imperial perspective, these words would have been welcoming as the temple was an essential element of their interests. Similarly, from a local leader's point of view, these words are

⁴⁸¹ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 24-25.

⁴⁸² Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 49.

beneficial to their hopes of reestablishing of the Davidic throne. On the contrary, however, we find also in these words a potential trace of resistance to the imperial rule.

The term כְּבוֹד “*glory*” also takes on a different dimension apart from the stative function discussed in chapter two. Whereas the focus then was on the mental and spiritual state of being, the concept now – from a political and economic standpoint – carries a more physical sense. The root occurs four times in the text – once in the first oracle (Hag 1:8) and three times in the second oracle (Hag. 2:3, 7, 9). While the isolation of the first occurrence may leave it vulnerable to the various interpretations, the collective perception of the final three provides a context for a general understanding in the book as a whole. The referral to the “*glory*” of the first temple (Hag 2:3) is associated with the wealth of Solomon and his great empire. The implication is that the very sight of the temple portrays great wealth.⁴⁸³ We reiterate the political associations of the concepts of רָעַץ “*to shake*”⁴⁸⁴ and תַּמְדָּה “*desire*” which then sees this physical wealth as ramifications of political events (Hag 2:7);

... and I will shake all the nations so that the treasure of all the nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the Lord of Host.

The occurrence in verse 9 is accompanied by the term שְׁלוֹם whilst well known in the Hebrew language for the nuance of “*peace*,” it is in this context translated as “*prosperity*”⁴⁸⁵ One final observation concerns a possible structural rhetoric in which the

⁴⁸³ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 24. Petersen makes reference to 1 Kgs 6-7 where the decorations were a major discussion in the description of the temple. Not only was the structure of the temple itself impressive but even more so was the precious material of which it was made. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 64.

⁴⁸⁴ The political connotation of “shaking” is associated with the royal ideology discussed in chapter 2.

⁴⁸⁵ “שְׁלוֹם” in BDB, 1022.

content of verse 8 is sandwiched between the talk of the ‘glory’ of the temple in verses 7 and 9. We find fundamental concepts of the economic environment in כֶּסֶף “silver” and זָהָב “gold” (Hag 2:8), which in effect defines further the notion of the glory expected of the temple.

Another tradition that shows traces in the text is the indirect reference to covenants of the past. We have already alluded to the Davidic covenant, which is so evident in the emphasis on Zerubbabel. We now revisit the intertextual relations with the book of Deuteronomy, which very much sums up the importance of the law and its ramifications. In other words, it is through these Deuteronomic affiliations⁴⁸⁶ that we are reminded of the ultimate covenant between *Yahweh* and his people at Sinai. The whole notion of retribution becomes evident in the text as the people’s unfortunate circumstance is deemed punishment for not working on the temple. This is equated with disobedience in the text given the alternative in verse 12 where the people are said to not only שָׁמַע “obey” but also יִרָא “fear” – which are central concepts of the covenant – *Yahweh*.

Further in this nostalgic referral to the Solomon temple, we see the difference of emphasis towards covenantal responsibilities and duties.

Hag 1:8;

עָלוּ הָהָר וְהִבְאֵתֶם עֵץ וּבְנִי הַבַּיִת וְאַרְצָה-בּוֹ וְאַחֲבֵדָהּ (כְּתִיב וְאַחֲבֵד) אָמַר יְהוָה

Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the house (temple)
so I may be pleased in it and be glorified says *Yahweh*.

⁴⁸⁶ An initial connection between Haggai and Deuteronomy has already been made under the ‘intertextual’ analysis in chapter 2.

In the Solomonic temple tradition, David had initiated the idea; however it was Solomon who was chosen by *Yahweh* to build the temple (1 Chr 28:10). Solomon obeys *Yahweh* (2 Chr 3-7) and completes the task given to him (2 Chr 8:16). One notable reward that emerged with David's intention to build a Temple for *Yahweh* is the establishment of the Davidic dynasty (2 Samuel 7:1-16). The dynasty was a direct consequence of *Yahweh* being pleased with the king's intention that was later realized in the work of Solomon. On the contrary, the people who are addressed by the prophet Haggai are portrayed as disobedient to the will of *Yahweh* and therefore are suffering the consequences in the form of the agricultural and economic crisis. The preferred situation is that of the time of the first temple and this again highlights intentions in the text for a re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty. In effect, this would be a form of resistance against the imperial rule. In economic terms, we highlight once more the tension between the local economic system of Yehud and that of the wider Persian context.

2.1.2. Trace 2: Resistance to Work on the Temple

The concise nature of the book of Haggai was quite evident from the start, however, it is at this point where this particular feature actually captures our attention with the impact it has in highlighting an important conflict within the text. Despite any attempt by the author(s) to provide a brief harmonious account of Haggai's oracles and papering over any conflicts and tensions, we do find that the apparently insignificant point concerning reluctance to work on the temple is in fact the whole justification for the prophecies collected in Haggai. It turns out to be the fulcrum on which the text turns. (Hag 1:2).

As we now intend to move from the text to explore the possible implications in the political social and economic realities, this is our starting point. We note that it is the inertia of the people that is at the root of the entire book. In other words, this is the problem which initiates Haggai's oracles with the hope it would be resolved. The text does not clearly provide a reason for the people's actions and that will be the thrust of this conversation. But before we continue, we must reemphasize a very simple but fundamental truth in this verse; i.e. the people were hesitant to work on the temple.⁴⁸⁷ From an economic perspective, this can imply two major elements: first, literally the reluctance to work refers to the practice of *corvée* labor as discussed in the tributary mode of production; second, on a more symbolic level, the temple economically represented taxes and tithes, whether for the imperial rule or the cult.

We have already mentioned the example of the revolt against Rehoboam as he decided to increase forced labor on the people of Israel (1 Kgs 12). Not only does this clearly show the people's negativity towards forced labor in the past but it also forms a basis for a narrative of revolt. Despite the absence of any direct cause in the text of Haggai, we construct our position on other relevant information concerning the people. Hag 1:4;

הַעֵת לָכֶם אֲתֻם לְשֹׁכֵת בְּבֵתֵיכֶם סְפוּגִים וְהַבֵּית הַזֶּה חָרָב:

Is it time for you to dwell in your paneled houses and (while) this is
a ruined house (the temple)?

First, the people are reported to have issues with עֵת "time,"⁴⁸⁸ or rather, the timing of the requests. The reluctance of the people should not be hastily translated to

⁴⁸⁷ Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 47-48.

⁴⁸⁸ "עֵת" in *BDB*, 773.

portray a total neglect of the temple and its needs. It does, however, confirm that at this particular time in the lives of the people, there must have been other concerns which functioned as barriers to fulfilling the requests of the temple. Second, this accusation may be a harsh and incorrect portrayal of the people. The use of the royal-associated word *פֶּנֶן* “to panel” – as discussed under royal ideology in chapter three – literally paints the picture of a people living wealthy and comfortable lives in their homes with no regard for the ruined temple. This description is problematic given a contradictory portrait of the people's conditions; as in Hag 1:6

זָרַעְתֶּם הֶרְבֵּה וְהִבֵּא מְעֻט אָכֹל וְאִין־לְשִׁבְעָה שָׂתוּ וְאִין־לְשִׁכְרָה לְבוֹשׁ וְאִין־לָהֶם לֹו
וְהַמְשַׁמֵּר מִשְׁתַּכֵּר אֶל־צִרּוֹר נָקוּב

You have sown much but brought in little, you eat but are not satisfied, you drink but are not filled (drunk), you put on clothing but there is no heat, and to the one who earns wages, he earns wages (and puts) into a bag pierced through.

Hag 1:9

פָּנָה אֶל־הֶרְבֵּה וְהִנֵּה לְמְעֻט וְהִבֵּאתֶם הִבֵּית וְנִפְתַּחְתִּי בּוֹ

You looked for much but behold a little and when you brought it to the house, I blew it away...

Hag 1:10-11

עַל־כֵּן עָלִיכֶם כָּל־אֵו שָׁמַיִם מִטָּל וְהָאָרֶץ כָּל־אֶה יְבוּלָהּ

וְאֶקְרָא חֶרֶב עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְעַל־הַהָרִים וְעַל־הַדָּגָן וְעַל־הַתִּירוֹשׁ וְעַל־הַיִּצְהָר וְעַל־אֲשֶׁר תּוֹצִיא

הָאֲדָמָה וְעַל־הָאֲדָם וְעַל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְעַל־כָּל־יִגִיעַ כִּפְיָם

Therefore, over you, the heavens withhold the dew and the earth withholds its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains and upon the wheat and upon the fresh wine and upon

the fresh oil and upon all which comes out of the ground and upon man and upon the cattle and all the work of your hands.

Hag 2:17

הִפִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּשָּׂדֶה וּבִבְרִיקוֹן וּבִכְרֵד אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם

I struck you (and) all the work of your hands with blight and mildew and hail...

Clearly, the talk of economic failure and struggles of the people is much stronger in the text than the sole implication of comfort. Note also that in a separate mention of both houses in Hag 1:9, the house of *Yahweh* is still described as in ruins while the people's houses no longer carry the royal description. Therefore, the descriptive method used by the author(s) in Hag 1:4 is merely a rhetorical ploy to emphasize the need to work on the temple which is in a far worst state than the peoples' houses. To return to a realistic picture of the people's condition, the economic situation would have definitely been poor and is most probably the main factor behind the peoples' reluctance to work on the temple.⁴⁸⁹ Here it is worth recalling the method of "subsistence farming" which was the way of life for the people in general. Subsistence farming simply refers to the type of farming where most if not all of the produce – whether it be crop or livestock – is used to maintain the farmer and the farmer's family. Usually, there would only be very small excess to be sold,⁴⁹⁰ but even selling of this small surplus would have been a challenge given the dominance of the urban centres of the trading markets.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ The economic failure is the popular understanding. Wolff, *Haggai*, 41. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 18-19. Petersen, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 48. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 21.

⁴⁹⁰ Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 191.

⁴⁹¹ As urban centres grew, agriculture production became more and more specialized and commercial farming developed where farmers produced sizable surplus of specialized crops which was traded for cash and other goods. In light of this, exporting of goods by small landowners was very rare if, in fact, they were able to trade. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 191-

The fruits of the people's labor did not always turn out as expected due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the unpredictability of the weather (Hag. 1:6-11, 2:16-19, Zech. 8:9-12).⁴⁹² Fruitless and harsh land conditions also contributed to the lack of reward.⁴⁹³ Kim – who places great emphasis on an agricultural analysis of the book of Haggai – discusses the seriousness of the interwoven relationship between agriculture and the economy. The lack of rain (Hag 1:10-11) would spoil the routine for their main products, which were grain, wine and oil (Hag 1:6, 11; 2:19; Joel 2:24; Zech 8:12, 10:1, 14:17). Lengthy droughts would even have effects on the other plants such as vines, figs, palms and apples (Hag. 2:16; Joel 1:11-13; Isa 17:10-11; Jer 5:24, 14:7-22; Ezek 34:26-27). The combination of no rain, the destructive nature of hail storms (Hag 2:17; Exod 9:18-35; Isa 28:2, 17; Ps 18:13, 78:47-48) and crop diseases such as blight and mildew (Hag 2:17; Deut 28:22; 1 Kgs 8:37; 2 Chr 6:28) led to what Kim refers to as an “agricultural breakdown.”⁴⁹⁴ This breakdown in the agricultural routine eventually leads to an economic crisis such as “famine” and even deteriorating to “debt crisis.”⁴⁹⁵ The seriousness of the crisis can be seen in people borrowing money as the small produce they do make is inadequate to meet both the needs of the family and

192. Carter suggests that all trading activities were carried out by the social elite of Judah. Due to the fact that one's status was closely linked to the possession of land, the upper-class citizens of Judah also enjoyed large estates—joining the Persian aristocrats in that sense—who with the assistance of workers and labourers were capable of large-scale productions. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study*, 285.

⁴⁹² Grabbe and others also support the existence and requirement of irrigation systems which give an indication of the lack of rain. Droughts are reported to have had devastating effects on the farmers. The efforts of the agrarian society seemed to be unrewarded. — Pastor, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*, 15.

⁴⁹³ The resettlement process saw the families and groups placed on parcels of land divided by the imperial authorities; the pieces of lands given to a family may have been fruitless or, as Pastor puts it, “marginal lands.” Another proposal assumes the insufficient sizes of the parcel and unable to provide for the various commitments of a family. — Pastor, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*, 15-16.

⁴⁹⁴ Jieun Kim, “The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai,” (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 2013), 90-97.

⁴⁹⁵ The biblical accounts speak of some people having to sell all possessions including oneself into slavery in order to repay debts (Neh. 5).

government obligations. Some of these debtors were once landowners whose status has declined to the point of becoming slaves for the sake of survival.⁴⁹⁶

In the context of the people's subsistence way of life, corvée labor is a possible added burden, especially if demanded at an inappropriate "time." If we were to look at the case of Nehemiah and the wall building project (Neh 5:1-5), it can be considered either a curse or blessing depending on the socio-economic situation of the local peoples, in particular, the small landholders. For the local farmers, the project can be a curse as it would rob them of time which could have been spent more wisely on their lands. If such demands occurred during the harvest season, the result would be a definite decline in income. On the other hand, there are also those who had already lost their possessions and land and therefore would consider the work as a blessing, as it was a source of income.⁴⁹⁷

The second element is the temple's representation of taxes and tithes. Kim argues that the Yehud community was politically insignificant to Darius and Persia and that they were merely of economic interests in the return of taxes and tributes.⁴⁹⁸ While Kim makes a valid point, I propose an alternative analysis based on the interconnectedness of these spheres of society. Within the boundaries of imperial politics and strategies, Yehud was economically crucial to Darius in maintaining military armies in their campaigns against Egypt.⁴⁹⁹ Upon saying that, the imperial interests in Yehud was first

⁴⁹⁶ Pastor, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*, 15.

⁴⁹⁷ Pastor, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*, 16.

⁴⁹⁸ Kim, "The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai," 90-97.

⁴⁹⁹ The empirical struggles between Egypt and the major powers of the north is an ongoing theme in the history of the Ancient Near East. For Persian Cambyses (who reigned from 530-522BCE) is known for his successful Egyptian campaigns. Following his death, the Egyptians revolted against the Persian empire and Darius campaigns were responses. Matt Waters, *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550-330 BCE* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 51-55.

and foremost tributary. For Grabbe, Persia treated their subjects as “milking cows;” i.e. they were cared for just so that they could continue to produce milk.⁵⁰⁰

It is clear that the people’s economic decline would have been the main factor behind the resistance to work on the temple. They could not afford to put their own livelihoods and that of their families at risk for a cultic and state project which for them could be postponed for an appropriate time. From here we draw the observation that the emphasis here is the prioritizing of the family and tribal connections as opposed to the cult and government requirements. Overall, the resistance of the people to work on the temple is seen as a representative trace or residue of a subdued tribal or communitarian mode of production.

To sum up this section, there are two ways in which traces of opposing modes of productions occur. The first is evident in the royal undertone which stretches throughout the book of Haggai. Following Gottwald’s framework, I propose that the tension is between two forms or rather levels of the tributary mode of production: the local which is referred to as the “native tributary mode of production” and the imperial which is the “foreign tributary mode of production.” In other words, the former represents the pre-exilic Davidic economic system and the latter represents the Persian system.⁵⁰¹ The second form of figuration is found in the obvious reluctance of the people to work on the temple. In effect, this translates economically to resistance to not only corvée labor but also government and cultic projects in general. In addition to that is the popular ill-feeling towards taxes, tributes, and tithes. The emphasis on the family ideals

⁵⁰⁰ Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 191.

⁵⁰¹ Gottwald, “Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagletonian Reading,” in *Semeia*,

represents the “tribal” or “communitarian mode of production” in opposition to the local government system.

3. Interpretation

Search for contradiction as expressed in cultural change. Also identifies types of figuration, such as concepts, space and sentence production.⁵⁰²

In terms of modes of production, the associated conflicts will be assessed at two levels. First, the royal undercurrent is placed in the wider context of the Persian economic system. At this level, the contradiction occurs between the imperial and local tributary modes of productions; i.e. native tributary versus the foreign tributary mode of production. Second, we assess the conflict within the province of Yehud itself. Here, the dominant is obviously the native tributary mode of production and resistance emerges from the communitarian mode of production.

3.1. Native Tributary vs Foreign Tributary Modes of Production

Not much more can be said about this clash. While the dominant imperial ideal have been interpreted as a representation of the tributary system, the royal ideal, on the other hand, is attributed to the native form of the tributary. The discussion of the spatial organization under figuration sums up very well the format to understand the tension here, which is the conflict between the local and the wider context. We noted that a challenge to the foreign tributary flow of revenue would eventually come in the form of

⁵⁰² Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 94.

the native tributary system, which in a way is discreetly competing with the larger system for profits.

Politically, it would be in the best interest of the local elite to remain loyal to the foreign powers and this was the case in Persian Yehud. If this is the case, the existence of the royal undertone as a representation of resistance to the imperial rule indicates another dimension. From a local economic perspective, it is evident that whatever the foreign power demands filters down to the peasant farmers. While class differences may have commenced in Israel in earnest with the implementation of the tributary system, we noted that the exploitation by the prosperous families of the not-so-fortunate ones already existed as part of tribal life. It is therefore apparent that the peasant burdens may have been the least of the elite's concerns; however, we are still faced with the scenario of opposition towards the imperial ideal and with determining on whose behalf it was exercised.

We noted earlier that hierarchical order existed even within the ruling class. It is within this context that we now search for the possible conflict represented by the royal and imperial ideologies respectively. We return to the discussion of social class in chapter three and the various emphasis of the leaders in Yehud. The High Priest and the priesthood would have clearly been the biggest beneficiaries in the Persian imperial system. While they had always been the religious authority in the lives of the people of Israel, the exilic experience elevated their status on all levels, politically, socially and economically. The construction of the temple would have been the icing on the cake, the perfect symbol of their newly found elite status.⁵⁰³ In our discussion of the leaders of

⁵⁰³ Refer to the discussion of the High Priest and Priesthood in chapter 3.

Yehud, the High Priest, the governor, and the satrap had a common factor, and that was being directly appointed by imperial rule. We are now left with the prophet Haggai and the elders. It is evident in the text that Haggai calls for the construction of the temple and would be an unlikely opposing voice. The elders, on the other hand, would be more likely to advocate a revival – if possible – of the communitarian economic system, yet the best that can be done is to maintain village and tribal ways wherever possible. Having the elders as the opposing voice in the leadership group⁵⁰⁴ would also be a valid explanation for being totally ignored in the text.

In this assessment, we noted how the royal ideals appear to be unclear and how the local leaders seemed torn between loyalty to the imperial ruler and their efforts to maintain and keep the locals content. We can say that the conflict represented by the royal and imperial ideals is a direct struggle amongst the local leaders themselves, although it still affects the imperial power indirectly. The absence of the elders in the text not only works ideologically in their favour, but the records of Ezra-Nehemiah have also provided important insight to construct an opinion on the postexilic elders.⁵⁰⁵ While the High Priest and priesthood together with the governor continue to nurture the imperial interests in Yehud, the elders – who have become increasingly irrelevant in this tributary driven society – would be the obvious candidate for the opposing ideas. Their advocating of royal interest would have been the obvious form of resistance to the imperial tainted leadership of the High Priest and priesthood. However, we did mention the ideological scenario regarding the royal ideal: to advocate its call for justice is the advocating of further exploitation of the peasants. We thus have the elders who not only

⁵⁰⁴ Gottwald, "Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagletonian Reading," in *Semeia*, 52-55.

⁵⁰⁵ The discussion on the elders is in chapter 3.

advocate the communitarian system but also the native tributary with its royal emphasis here. In other words, the elders are the most conflicted of all, economically, politically, and ideologically.

3.2. Communitarian vs Native Tributary Mode of production

The communitarian mode of production⁵⁰⁶ is linked to the traces of familial and tribal presence within the text. We have already noted the people's reluctance to work on the temple as signs of tribal and communitarian resistance. Furthermore, the absence of the elders in the text may have been a deliberate omission which would then represent ill-feeling towards the tribal system. In effect, this also points to the resistant nature of the communitarian economic system.

Given the defining effect of the economy within society, we shall discuss the major characteristics of the system and the variety of impacts it had. The agrarian nature already confirms the central significance of land and agriculture in the system. As mentioned earlier, the people were mainly farmers and lived a subsistence approach, which may have been forced upon them. From a political perspective, the system is tribute-free as long as it is able to avoid domination by foreign states, or if it avoids from developing into a state itself. This the Israelites were able to achieve during the tribal era; i.e. before the implementation of the Israelite monarchy. Socially, at the core of the system is the strong base of family and village life, which is guided by customary laws upheld and administered by the village leaders. In Israel's case, these leaders came in the form of elders. Furthermore, the land was an inheritance and passed down from

⁵⁰⁶ Gottwald also refers to this as the "Household mode of production" due to the household (usually the extended family) being the productive unit. – "Social Class as an Analytical and Hermeneutical category in Biblical Studies," in *JBL* 112/1 (1993), 7-8. See also Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 245-337.

generation to generation. From a religious point of view, the absence of the institution of the monarchy meant that the cult and religion was the only form of centralizing guidance to a uniform culture and way of life.⁵⁰⁷

Historically, Israel during the tribal years showed much of the features discussed above. However, a major function of the communitarian system was its resistance to elements of the tributary systems, which was very much the central element of monarchic institutions. The rise of the Philistines in the history of tribal Israel⁵⁰⁸ can be seen as the main contributing factor to the gradual insertion of the native tributary economic system. While the people of Israel were able to live and survive all forms of challenges under the tribal and communitarian way of existence, the Philistine threat proved too much of a challenge and required a more centralized system to strengthen the unity of the Israelites.⁵⁰⁹ The people's request to Samuel for a king (1 Sam 8) not only signified a political and administrative change, but it also marked the ushering in of a new dominant economic system; i.e. the native tributary mode of production.

This understanding of the native tributary system will also assist in understanding the resistant nature of the communitarian. First, we may take note that even in tribal organization, other families tended to prosper more than others, thus showing glimpses of social class within the village settings. Some cases saw the peasant farmer resorting to debts in order to meet family needs. While the elite farmers may

⁵⁰⁷ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 291-292. See also Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytical and Hermeneutical category in Biblical Studies," 7-8. Gottwald, "Sociology," in *ABD*, Ed. David N Freedman (New York / London / Toronto / Sydney / Auckland: Doubleday, 1992), 79-99.

⁵⁰⁸ Julius Wellhausen, *Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah*, Third Edition (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 39-56.

⁵⁰⁹ Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, Editor D. A. Carson (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 137-138. Stuart Lasine, *Knowing Kings: Knowledge, Power and Narcissism in the Hebrew Bible*, SBL (Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 73-92.

have been reluctant at first towards a tributary system, they eventually agreed as it also served their interests with the opening for the elite to tax their own people. David may have postponed the appropriation of the system in full and refrained from extracting tributes from his people, however, the system came to complete realization in the days of Solomon.⁵¹⁰ The Israelites were now operating under the very system they had worked hard to avoid for many years. As we have discussed earlier, any surplus from the toils of the peasants was extracted by the elite in two ways: taxation and corvée, but also through debt. The peasants were exploited through unjust levels of taxation and labor and, to make matters worse, they were also extracted during times of droughts and war. Furthermore, the demands of foreign powers for tribute would also be filtered down and become an added burden on the people. The unbearable burdens eventually led the people to fall into serious debt. Credit with high-interest rates would be offered to the peasants by state landholders and merchants. As a consequence, many of the peasant class lost their lands as they were constantly subject to the obligations of a debtor system that seemed irreversible.⁵¹¹

To sum up the impact of the tributary system on the tribal economy: first, the creditor's claim to the rights to another man's land. For Gottwald, this is a sign of the undermining of customary law – which protects the peasant landowner – through bribery in the courts. For Boer, customary law was part of the “constitutive resistance” which functioned to prevent exploitation of the peasant members.⁵¹² Second, struggling peasant farmers would definitely be vulnerable to exploitation by the creditor who

⁵¹⁰ Gottwald, “Sociology,” 79-99.

⁵¹¹ Gottwald, “Social Class as an Analytical and Hermeneutical category in Biblical Studies,” 8.

⁵¹² Roland Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel* (Louisville / Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 102-103.

appears to be a helping hand while actually looking after their own interests. Third, another impact of the tributary system is the concentration of the wealth in the hands of the community's elite. Fourth, from a theological perspective, 'royal theology' promotes justice and righteousness as the major focus of the reigns of kings. Ideologically, advocating the royal interests only legitimizes further the exploitation of the peasants.⁵¹³

Tributes and taxation were handled more generously by both Cyrus and Cambyses, who accepted the tributes as gifts, thus leaving the amount at the discretion of the subject nations. It was not until the time of Darius I – who according to Herodotus was known to his countrymen as the "huckster"⁵¹⁴ – that the amounts became fixed. This would imply an image of a king which may have been very aggressive in his accumulating of wealth. In other words, Darius I was known for his 'eye for a profit' attitude, and may not have sat well with Judah and the rest of the subject nations.

Historically, the early years of Darius' reign are marked by rebellions and revolts – from 522 to 518 BCE – and the king's response was to eliminate any threat to the empire. The imperial campaigns would have affected all of its subject peoples, including those in Yehud and this Egyptian case is an example as to how such campaigns would affect peasants in Yehud. A revolt by Aryandes – an Egyptian governor – was eliminated by Darius in 521BCE.⁵¹⁵ The political and economic ramifications this may have had on Yehud would have been immense especially with the expectation to provide supplies for

⁵¹³ Gottwald, "Sociology," 79-99.

⁵¹⁴ Herodotus also provides the divisions of the satrapies and the expected amount of tribute payable to the imperial rule. The Persian countries were exempt from these policies. — Herodotus, 3:89-97.

⁵¹⁵ Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 115-151. Kim, "The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai," 52.

the imperial armies. Given their own struggle with the demands of the local economy, the additional demands of the Persian ruler would definitely be felt by the peasants of Yehud. The extra load required by the imperial rule no matter what the form of currency – whether it be money, produce or labor – will always be filtered down to the general populace.

There is no real difficulty in trying to comprehend why a general preference of the communitarian way of life continued to exist in the face of the dominant native tributary system. The persistent existence of a communitarian mode of production represents the utopian cry of the peasant farmers who are experiencing the worst scenario in the form of poor produce due to droughts and other agricultural setbacks such as plant diseases. In addition to that, they are pressured to meet the state and government obligations which eventually lead to debt crisis and the loss of patriarchal land.

4. Summary

In sum, we wish to reemphasize the importance of the economic sphere. Survival in everyday life depends on a good and healthy economy. We set out in this chapter to situate the findings of the first two phases in an economic environment. We noted in the first phase the existence of three coexisting forms constantly in tension with one another. On the broader horizon of society and social class these three were translated into conflicts between the leading class and the general populace; furthermore, the existence of an inner struggle within the ruling class itself was identified. From an economic base, we find that the tributary mode of production is represented by the

dominant imperial ideas in the text. Contradictions to the tributary systems occur at two levels, the first is the native tributary system which is represented by the royal undertone and the second is the communitarian system represented by the concept in which the people are reluctant to work on the temple.

We concluded that the conflict in the leadership ranks is a possible sign of the elders' rejection of the authority of the High Priest and the priesthood. While they may have preferred life under the communitarian economy, it served them better to advocate the tributary system of the state.

We now return to the brief but crucial mention in Haggai of the people's reluctance and resistance to work on the temple. It is a perfect example of a trace or figuration in the text of mode of production itself. We noted that despite the inconspicuous nature of this conflict, it proves to be the pivot on which the text turns, disrupting its harmonious presentation. A theological perception of the people working on the temple can blind or rather draw the attention of the reader away from the political, social, and economic ramifications of such a request. This only highlights further the importance of the undermined ideals, such as that represented in the people's reluctance and resistance. In the case then of Haggai, while we do find a comparable and sharper example of resistance to work in the Rehoboam story, it also opens up socio-economic questions of tithe-tax, corvée labour, and a communitarian mode of production.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we return to the argument put forth in the beginning. This thesis set out to read the book of Haggai with the appropriation of Jameson's textual theory. The aim was to show that not only was the text a response aiming to symbolically resolve social tensions and contradictions, but also that these social conflicts were rooted in the severe economic situations of the time.

Following Jameson's methodology – via Boer's detailed presentation – we systematically worked our way towards a political interpretation of the text. In the first horizon, we dealt with the contradiction in form, i.e. between the poetic and prose features of the text. Despite the overarching dominance of the prose framework, there is constant tension as the poetic features never totally disappear. A major reason for this is the reliance of the narrative on the raw rhetorical power of poetry. The tension between the two was evident in the interchanging occurrences in the text, i.e. poetry would turn up where prose is expected and vice versa. This led to the question of containment strategies and formal closure. Here, the "brief apologetic historical account" became a third player bringing formal closure to the tension. As the task then moved to the search for ideological antinomies, the concept of "honor" took centre stage. Being so closely interwoven in the text with the institution of the temple, the temple eventually functioned as the criterion of either success or failure to attain honor. While the text implies that honor can only be attained – for *Yahweh* and the people – through the completion of the temple, it conflictingly insists that the work of the people's hands are unclean and can bring no honor. Furthermore, it is *Yahweh* who eventually brings

honor and not the people. The ideological antinomy then makes further contact with the social contradictions with the use of Greimas's semiotic square. Finally, while initial closure was noted in the formal analysis, Clines's discussion of the obedient people projects the image of a harmonious relationship, first between the leaders and the people, and second within the text itself.

The second horizon – chapter three – picked up on these findings and moved into greater depth with ideological discussions and the question of social class struggle. Commencing with the identification of conflicting ideologemes, three were noted. i.e. royal, imperial and familial ideals. While the imperial secured the dominant label amongst the three, the familial was the weakest while the royal ideal interestingly appears undecided, which became clear in its relationship with the temple. The study then moved to identify possible social classes represented by the ideologemes. The brief section on the ruling discourse functioned as a reminder of the nature of the opposing ideologies in society and their impact on literature and the text. Finally, social class conflict was analysed at two levels, first in terms of the traditional Marxist perspective as noted above and, second, in relation to the tensions which occur within the same class. While the high priest and priesthood are the obvious candidates at the top of the local Yehud hierarchy, it is the elders who are in tension with them. One reason – as Gottwald suggested – would be the sections of the leading group disapproving of the impact the leadership and its policies have on the general populace.

The third and final horizon – chapter four – focused on the economic base which for Marx was the determining factor for all social and political struggles in society. The exegetical journey that began with the superstructure in the first horizon ended here with the economic base expressed in the conflict between modes of productions. The

cultural dominant in this case was religion and associated with it was the Tributary mode of production – also known as Asiatic mode of production. In locating traces or residues of other modes of productions which coexisted and contradicted the dominant, the resistance came in forms of the royal undertone and through the people's reluctance to work on the temple. Here the tension is also seen at two levels, first between the native tributary – preferred by the local leaders – and the foreign tributary – which is preferred by the imperial rule. The second conflict is between the communitarian – preferred by the general populace – and the native tributary modes of production.

It is this economic state and the way of life which influences and causes the tensions between the various classes and groups. The alienation and failure of the collective results obviously finds its way into the creative arts and literature of its time – in this case the text of Haggai – especially in the form of tensions and conflicts in the text. We noted resistance in the form of a royal undertone, although it appears to side with the general populace against a common opposition, advocates of royal ideologies and ideals are commonly members of the leading class or group. The point is that the needs of the populace would be secondary to their own agenda, especially in the context of the struggle for power. While we may remain sceptical of the true nature of these groups, they are still testament to the existence of the suppressed voices from below. More importantly in our conclusion is the reluctance of the people to work on the temple. This, as we have discussed, has direct references to economic situations and practices, as it represented the reluctance to engage in and even rejection of corvée labour and other forms of taxation, not only to the government but also to the temple and the cult. The people's response to the temple was due to poor economic conditions making their subsistence way of life the more difficult to uphold. Tributes, taxes and

provisions for imperial purposes – especially given the campaigns to crush revolts within the empire that are closely associated with Haggai's date of production – would always be a struggle. The addition however, of local government and religious obligations were extra burdens to the people in particular. The reluctance then, it must be noted, does not indicate a total rebellion against the temple and its completion: it is more the question of the appropriate time.

The question for us now is with regards to the value of this research which shall be discussed in two sections, i.e. within the wider context of the Marxist and Haggai corpuses, and more on a homiletic function to identify relevant talking points which may generate further reflection and practical application.

The Marxist Discussion

Unique to Jameson is the methodological approach in which the text functions as a response and seeks to resolve symbolically a social situation. Others merely see the text as reflecting the social and historical situation of its time, either the actual time identified by the text or the context of the text's production – or both. By contrast, this reading exposes the text on another level. More important is the fundamental truth exposed through Jameson's perception of the text, i.e. containment strategies and efforts at closure have redrawn our attention to the illusions of our real-life situations. It raises the awareness and level of scepticism, not to be too easy in accepting what we are told but to be more critical. Furthermore, the relation between an idea, a belief, a text (and so on) is more complicated than we often assume. As Jameson argues, while these may

at times be relatively direct reflections, more often they are indirect and mediated, that is, they are responses to specific problems and questions.

Another important issue is the relation of my reading to others. I guess if I am content with the pluralism of readings, then it may appear that I haven't really made any meaningful contribution to the discussion. If we take this approach, we merely fall into the practice of accumulating readings, as Boer suggests.⁵¹⁶ Finding balance in these various readings is the same as trying to find balance amongst the conflicting ideologies which is a question yet to be answered. So, despite the revolutionary reactions of the past, I would still be content to see my reading prevail over competing readings, in the battlefield of readings as Jameson suggests.⁵¹⁷ In other words, to be content with yet one more interpretation among the plurality of interpretations is ultimately a liberal option: there are many individual positions, and each one has its merits. But when we offer an interpretation of a text through careful exegesis and analysis, we want something more. This may be framed as a claim to original truth (a traditional exegetical position, based on the original text), or it may be framed as discovering and highlighting dimensions of the text that have been largely ignored. In the second case, focusing on the perspective of the people who are reluctant to rebuild the temple now offers a whole new perspective from the common people. Is this the 'truth' of the text? Not in ultimate terms, but in terms of what has been neglected. I suggest that what we can hope for is that our research may change the coordinates or assumptions of a field of research.

⁵¹⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 294.

⁵¹⁷ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 13.

Implications and Theological Reflections from the Study

This project emerged from concerns of the growing socio-economic gap between the clergy and ministers of the churches in Samoa (formerly Western Samoa) and church members. This relationship finds analogues in the social-economic world in the dialectic relationships of the elite and the lower classes, the rich and the poor, etc... where the social-economic pattern of rich getting richer and poor getting poorer is quite visible within this religious sphere.⁵¹⁸ Although there may be many contributing factors to this problem, I wish to note three major interrelated aspects.

First, subjective piety has been a long-standing tradition, dominating the lives of church members⁵¹⁹ in Samoa. Even before the arrival of Christianity in Samoa, the people were always devout followers of the pre-Christian religion and local deities. One major aspect of that local religion and the *FaaSamoa* (lit. the Samoan way, culture) was the act of giving.⁵²⁰ There were a lot of offerings and exchanging of gifts, especially when occasions required of it; such as weddings, funerals, etc, however, the spirit of giving in the people of Samoa cannot be confined narrowly to specific occasions such as these -

⁵¹⁸ From a social perspective, despite the communal way of life, the question of social class is evident within society and village life. Furthermore, the notions of honor and shame are also very central to the practical way of life. Economically, only a small percentage of the populace are employed and have jobs, but the people in general live a subsistence way of life, depending on their agricultural produce, and any excess is sold to get money for church, village and government obligations and duties. Politically, some islands remain as possessions or territorial states of first world countries, for example American Samoa – also known as Eastern Samoa. Samoa – i.e. formerly Western Samoa – may boast of its independent status, but this talk of being in the postcolonial era is only an illusion given the effects of globalization.

⁵¹⁹ Well over 90 percent of Samoa's total population are Christians. See Manfred Ernst (ed.), *Globalization and the Re-shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands* (Suva: Pacific Theological College, 2006), 544-546.

⁵²⁰ Giving played a major role in the pre-Christian religion of the people and it is understood that they offered prayers to the gods for their protection, guidance, for food, and the necessities of life. The people attributed almost if not everything to the works of the deities, fruits of the land, a successful fishing trip, etc. Religion as had a central position within the worldview of the Samoan people. Elia T. Taase, *The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961* (Michigan: A Bell & Howell Company, 1998), 50-60; 67-68.

giving is a way of life.⁵²¹ Being one major aspect of the Christian teachings, giving to the church was immediately embraced by the people. Unfortunately, the church and its leaders today, through their purposefully formulated theological messages deliberately exploit the strong pietistic nature of its church members for personal gain and glory.

Closely intertwined with the first is a second contributor to the problem; i.e. the lack of awareness of ideologies and how ideologies function in societies. While ideologies have always been part of life and our surroundings, not everyone is fully conscious to their existence and effects; this makes liberal theological approaches much more difficult. The first step towards any attempt to solve a problem is to acknowledge the existence of a problem. The people are suffering,⁵²² and they know that they are suffering; unfortunately, a liberal approach will only be in vain as for them, the suffering is all part of being a Christian, a member of the church. The members of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (henceforth *CCCS*) embrace interests that

⁵²¹ Samuelu is also concerned with the practices of giving which occurs in the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. Giving to the church in Samoa has reached extreme heights not only in terms of monetary gifts and other physical material goods, but the offering also of labour and one's time especially in terms of major church projects and facilities, such as buildings for church use, in particular the church buildings. Families would prefer to give to the church (through the various means) and then worry about their basic needs e.g. families would sacrifice having a good daily meal in order to save up to make their usual Sunday contributions or in case the pastor comes around in one of his visits. Sometimes even the children suffer as their school priorities tend to come second. While it may not be too extreme for the very small percentage of the well-off families with solid weekly budgets, the struggle is real on the social and economic levels for the majority who barely make ends-meet. In his thesis, Samuelu attempts to discuss and formulate possible theological solutions to the problem of the growing social and economic gap between the church and clergy, and its church members. Olive Samuelu, "Salvation in Church Offering? Towards a Theology of Giving in the context of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa." MTh Thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 2010.

⁵²² This suffering can be seen in everyday life especially when necessities of life require attention such as the need to see a doctor, the children's school requirements, the normal food items such as sugar, salt, etc, a lot of the time, most of these family commitments will be overlooked in order to make that contribution or offering on Sundays to the church. In other forms of suffering, people even talk about the lack of finance for everyday life, although some may mention the option to sacrifice the church offerings for other requirements, such talk rarely materializes as the offerings remain a top priority. Furthermore, although some may have different priorities, the majority cannot seem to escape the traditional 'church first' ideal.

very much contradict their own. Ideologically, this is encouraged by the church and especially the church leaders as it is their interests to maintain the status quo.

This leads then to the third and probably the main determining factor which is the use of Scripture to promote certain interests. Scripture's central position in religious life makes it a very effective tool for such purposes, especially when the people rely heavily on the clergy and ministers for an interpretation of the Word.

As Scripture is at the core of this growing gap between the rich clergy and the poor members, it will also be the means to reverse the process of exploitation. In other words, Scripture is also – and perhaps primarily – in the hands of the common people.⁵²³ Our Jamesonian analysis of the Haggai text provides the necessary alternative as it also opens up many issues relatable to our own social, political and economic contexts. While some may find the issues more relevant than others, neighbouring Pacific Islands may also relate to these issues. Anyone who is familiar with the Samoan way of life would easily pick out major parallels between our local context and that of the Yehud community.⁵²⁴

The main question in our reading was the search for the tension and conflict behind Haggai's call to the people to rebuild the temple of *Yahweh*. At the end, it was the insignificantly presented reluctance of the people to build the temple which eventually turned the entire narrative on its head. The text's attempt to portray a harmonious and

⁵²³ Gerald West's work focusses on biblical interpretation for the common people who are also referred to as the "ordinary reader" as opposed to a "trained reader" of the scripture. However, for West, a form of liberation in the South African context will be successful if the two oppositions can form a good relationship which should then translate into their interpretation of scripture. – West, *Contextual Bible Study* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), 9-10. – *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context*, Second Revised Edition (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), 209-215.

⁵²⁴ Although our focus is on the church structures and buildings, the relationship between the church leaders and church members remain the same throughout the many areas of the church.

complete account functioned as a containment strategy which also engages the readers to maintain status quo. In the midst of harsh economic conditions, the subsistence way of life would always struggle to meet government and religious obligations such as paying taxes and tithes, furthermore, offering *corvée* labour. The people's reluctance to build the temple was the right and sensible economic decision despite the pressure of political and religious obligations.

If there is one visible aspect of the *CCCS* that is crippling the people to the extreme more than anything else, it would be the obsession with massive and fancy church buildings. A lot of the expensive church buildings and infrastructures are a necessity as the ministers will continue to preach, on the contrary it is also a portrayal and representation of this striving for glory. First of all, the structures are clearly too large for the respective congregations, i.e. most congregations do not even come close to filling 50 percent of the building's total capacity. Second, the congregations are left with huge debts to pay for such structures and therefore continue to be an unnecessary financial burden on families. In addition, this obsessiveness indirectly portrays a fundamental truth about the church and its current ministry. Just as the massive structures "paper over" the tensions and struggles of its members, the corrupt, greed and emphatic power struggles amongst these church leaders are shielded with the veil of theology in which Scripture it at its core.

Texts such as Haggai's call to build the temple would be a great example of those utilized to encourage congregations to take up such costly and most of the time unnecessary projects. Obviously, the preachers promote the harmonious account which avoids the internal conflict altogether. Our reading provides the alternative and exposes the real-life issues that the text is addressing, i.e. real-life issues that people can relate

to from within their own respective circumstances. Furthermore, the Jamesonian reading of the people's response is also a reminder that the religious leaders, the church and infrastructures are but servants of the Gospel. They are not God and should not be idolized in such a way. As sad as it is to say, but from a Congregationalist's perspective in Samoa, Cline's conclusion of what the temple in Jerusalem had become rings true for the church in Samoa and its church structures, they are but first and foremost "treasure houses" associated with the accumulation of wealth and glory – and I deliberately add – for the church leaders.

From a Marxist point of view, we are long past a total revolution, and do not wish for such harsh responses. I guess we shall always be struggling with this question of finding balance: to enlighten and liberate without a total overrun of current systems, especially in the context of a world that needs classes and divisions to function. Despite the odds, political and economic interpretations of the biblical text are important. To recall Perkins words, "the more we understand ideologies, the more we can control their inescapable effects on how we interpret social reality."⁵²⁵ The measure of freedom, then, is not from ideologies themselves, but rather over the ideological decisions that are made.⁵²⁶ Thus, as mentioned, the sensibility of the people's response. They were economically unstable to work at that particular time. Members of the CCCS need to have the courage to make sensible economic and social decisions and reject outrageous and unnecessary burdens handed down by theses tyrants who "unlike" Jesus know not how to love and hypocritically do not practice what they preach. In the current CCCS

⁵²⁵ Perkins, *Looking Both Ways*, 101-102.

⁵²⁶ Perkins, *Looking Both Ways*, 103. Hans Barth also perceived this advantage of ideology as a means for societal developments. Barth, *Truth and Ideology*, trans. F. Lilge (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 3.

conditions and circumstances, we as members should practice more often saying “no” to the oppressive wants of its church leaders.

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