"AND YOU SAY":
ECHOIC UTTERANCES IN MALACHI
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
IRONY, DENIAL AND ECHOIC QUESTIONS

A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Yirgu Nigussie Bira

Middlesex University

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates echoic utterances in Malachi with special reference to irony in 1:2-5 and irony and denial in 2:17-3:12. Instances of irony, denial and echo questions in 1:6-14 are also analysed in the process of explaining irony in 1:2-5. The Relevance Theory (RT) of ostensive communication, particularly its notion of echoic metarepresentation provides the methodology.

The thesis has five chapters. The first chapter consists of introductory materials, namely background information and a quick review of previous works. Following an overview of key background information, a detailed analysis of the literary form of the book is presented in which the discourse of Malachi is described as a form of diatribe. The review of previous works sketches studies of Malachi and biblical irony. In the second chapter, the RT notion of verbal irony, denial (metalinguistic negation) and echoic questions is discussed following a brief survey of modern accounts of linguistic communication.

The rest of the thesis is devoted to the analysis of echoic utterances in Malachi. Chapter three analyses YHWH's utterances in Mal 1:2-5 as irony. The chapter begins with a detailed review of previous works on the passage under consideration. The second section examines the passage in the larger discourse context of Mal 1:2-14. The chapter concludes with a summary of major claims. Chapter four investigates YHWH's utterances in Mal 3:1 and 3:6-7a following a similar format as chapter three. A detailed review of previous works on the passages is given first. This is followed by a treatment of Mal 3:1 as irony and 3:6-7a as denial. The clause in 3:6b is treated as ironic as well. A summary of major claims and the implication of the claims for reading Mal 2:17-3:12 concludes the chapter. Chapter five consists of conclusion to the thesis.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit. All quotations and citations have been acknowledged in the body of the text and in footnotes.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations for books of the Bible follow the conventions set out in J. F. Kutsko et al (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999) 73.

AARBL	*American Academy of Religion, Biblical Literature*
AS	*American Speech*
AT	*Acta Theologica*
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATS	*Acta Theologica Supplementum*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BDB	*The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
BE	*The Biblical Expositor*
BibLeb	*Bibel und Leben*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BOT	Boeken van het Oude Testament
BR	*Biblical Research*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BW	*The Biblical World*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*The Catholic Biblical quarterly*
CEST	*Concise Encyclopedia of Syntactic Theories*
CJ	*Concordia Journal*
CTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
DRTJ	*Dutch Reformed Theological Journal*
EGLMBS	*Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Bible Societies*
EJ	*European Judaism*
ELBSMSBL	*Eastern Lakes Biblical Society and Midwest Society of Biblical Literature*
EQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
FJCSBSJU	*The Faculty Journal of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University*

FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen *Testaments*
GKC	E. Kautzsch (ed) and A. E. Cowley (tr.), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* [GKC] (Oxford, GB: The Clarendon Press, 1910 [2nd ed.]).
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HB	Hebrew Bible
HIJHR	*Humor-International Journal of Humor Research*
HTS	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
IER	*Irish Ecclesiastical Record*
IJC	*International Journal of Communication*
Immanuel	*Immanuel: A Semi-Annual Bulletin of Religious Thought and Research in Israel Jérusalem*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEP	*Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JL	*Journal of Linguistics*
JP	*Journal of Pragmatics*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	JSOT Supplement Series
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LP	*Linguistics and Philosophy*
LSA	*Linguistic Society of America*
NCD	*New Castle and Durham*
NGTT	*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of old Testament Theology & Exegesis*
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OSU	*Ohio State University*

PC	*Pragmatics & Cognition*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PQ	*Philosophical Quarterly*
RT	Relevance Theory
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSS	*Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies*
SLL	*Studies in Literature and Language*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SK	*Skrif en Kerk*
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBS	United Bible Societies
UCL	*University College London*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*The Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WZUR	*Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZB	Züricher Bibelkommentare

Contents

I.   Introduction

In this chapter, I will address several issues. In the first section, the focus and aim of the dissertation will be presented. This will be followed by a discussion of background information pertinent to the book of Malachi. In section 3, the literary style of the book will be analyzed as a form of diatribe. The fourth section will be devoted to an overview of works on Malachi with attention given to those addressing sections relevant to the thesis (1:2-5; 1:6-14/2:9; 2:17-3:12). In the final section, a general survey of works on irony in the Bible will be presented.

1. Focus and Aims

An underlying contention of this thesis is that the recognition of irony in Malachi has been largely overlooked, and yet is important for a reading of the book. In particular, the primary aim of this thesis is to demonstrate and analyze irony in two passages, namely Mal 1:2-5 and 3:1, 6. The analysis of these passages will be done in relation to their wider context (1:6-14 and 2:17-3:12 respectively) recognizing that each passage is part of the larger discourse context with an overarching argument suggesting a coherent progress of the discourse. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that the presence of other forms of speech related to irony, particularly echoic questions and denials, in the context betray the ironic intentions in the two passages. The RT notion of echoic utterances will be used in the analysis of verbal irony, denial and echo questions.

The motivation for the study is four-fold. The first is the relative position of the passages within the book. The passage, Mal 1:2-5, is situated at the beginning of the discourse and thus sets the stage for understanding the tone and intent of the subsequent units of discourse. For instance, this passage is constantly referred to by scholars as they try to explain other passages such as the one starting at 2:17. A similar point can be made concerning Mal 3:1, 6. It is a matter of general consensus that Mal 2:17 marks a second major unit in Malachi, with 2:17 and the following several verses offering a literary context in which both the preceding and the following passages are understood. It will be shown that the importance of understanding 3:1, 6 in the interpretation of the book is paramount.

The other reason is the lack of in-depth analysis concerning the passages, particularly 1:2-5. This may not seem correct given the fact that so many scholarly works are

available such as those treating the Esau-Edom tradition in the Bible, which is also the subject of Mal 1:2-5. Yet, a review of the literature reveals that the bulk of those scholarly works are preoccupied with the version of the tradition in other passages, with only cursory remarks on Mal 1:2-5 itself. Even those brief comments are mere applications of the results of studies of other related passages.

There are relatively fewer scholarly works regarding Mal 3:1, 6, and again most of those dealing with 3:1 rather focus on the number and identity of the figures (messenger, the lord) mentioned and not on the meaning of the passage. Interpretations of these passages are largely left to general commentaries which sometimes lack real depth in their treatment due to their relatively wider scope.

The third motivation for the study of these passages is to demonstrate that the overall discourse of Malachi is better understood if read with recognition that there is a closer relationship between its units than is sometimes admitted so far. The book of Malachi has long been understood as a collection of distinct units of disputations with minimal links. Thus studies tend to consider small pericopes to be independent units thereby failing to see the big picture. However, a closer look at these units reveals that there is a systematic flow of argument across them. Such a link in turn gives new meaning and significance to texts that have historically been interpreted in basically the same way.

Finally, Mal 1:2-5 and 3:1, 6 along with their respective wider contexts provide an opportunity to test the usefulness of the echoic theory of irony and related utterances in the interpretation of biblical texts, particularly those that are predominantly dialogical.

2. Background Information

In this section, information concerning the date of composition (2.1), authorship (2.2), audience (2.3) and literary form (2.4) of the book of Malachi will be given. The literary form of the book will be analyzed as diatribe separately in section 3 in greater detail.

2.1. The Question of Date

The book of Malachi is generally considered post-exilic, written sometime in 5th or 4th century BCE. Scholars cite the term פֶּחָה 'governor' (1:8), an Acadian term for

government official, as an evidence for the existence of the Persian rule at the time of writing. (The term is used elsewhere as well, for instance, in Neh 5:14; Haggai 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21.) This is taken as evidence to rule out a pre-exilic date. Scholars also cite the fact that the temple is functioning in Malachi (1:10, 3:1, 10). Thus, Malachi could not have been written before 515 BCE when the rebuilding of the temple is believed to be completed. They argue that more time was needed for the temple service to deteriorate as it is in Malachi and that there is no indication in Malachi that the temple was a new institution.[1]

However, there is less agreement as to more specific date. The majority seem to agree that the likely date is only slightly later than the date of the completion of the temple. Hill, for instance, argues for an earlier date of 490 BCE. According to Hill, Malachi was composed slightly later than Haggai and Zechariah, possibly prompted by the battle of Marathon, which the prophet could interpret as a fulfilment of Haggai 2:21-22.[2] A date of around 450 BCE has also been suggested.[3] Some scholars link the composition date of Malachi with that of Ezra-Nehemiah on the basis of issues they raise such as problems with the priesthood, marriage and divorce and tithing. These scholars interpret Mal 2:10-16 as challenging Judah's men on marrying foreign women in the same way Ezra and Nehemiah do (Ezr 9-10; Neh 13:23-29).[4]

The 4th century BCE is excluded on the basis of Malachi's positive depiction of the nations (1:11, 14) and focus on internal issues of moral and ritual decadence. Nogalski argues that such a nations-friendly language is untenable during the 4th century BCE due to a hostile geopolitical situation including various rebellions in the Persian Empire leading to its eventual collapse as the Greeks took over.[5]

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[1] P. A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987) 156-7; R. L. Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, WBC, 32 (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984) 298; J. G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972) 213.
[2] A. E. Hill, 'Malachi,' P. W. Comfort (ed.) *Minor Prophets: Hosea – Malachi*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, 10 (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2008) 612. A. E. Hill, 'The Book of Malachi: Its Place in Post-exilic Chronology Linguistically Reconsidered' (PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1981) 131.
[3] B. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*, SBLDS, 98 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), 19; J. D. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Micah-Malachi* (Macon, Georgia: Smith and Helwys, 2011) 992-3.
[4] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 160; Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 298; W.D. Davies, *Jewish and Pauline Studies*, SPCK (London, Great Britain: Fortress Press, 1984).

[5] Nogalski, *Micah – Malachi*, 992-3.

However other scholars suggest a much later date of the first half of the 4th century BCE. Torrey argues that Mal 3:1-5, 19-24 as apocalyptic passages indicate such a later date.[6] He also cites the situation of Edom in Mal 1:2-5 as evidence for his proposal. However, the Ezra-Nehemiah dates and Edom based arguments are contested. Scholars point out that the dates of such figures are themselves difficult to establish.[7] Hill argues that the text of Malachi has more affinities with Haggai and Zechariah than Ezra and Nehemiah.[8]

There seems to be no concrete evidence to pinpoint a specific date of composition. As mentioned earlier in this sub-section, a post-exilic date, particularly post-515 BCE, is a matter of general consensus and, according to R. Smith, "the book could not possibly be later than 180 B.C.E. because Ben Sira refers to it in Sir 48:10; and 49:10."[9]

2.2.   Authorship

There is no clear information in the book to help identify the author. The phrase מַלְאָכִי in the superscript (1:1) is ambiguous as it can be rendered as either "my messenger" or a proper name "Malachi". Scholarly opinion is divided as a result. It has been proposed that the phrase in 1:1 was perhaps taken from 3:1 or is a play on words with it but this has not been verified. Jewish traditions identify the author as Ezra but scholars dismiss this as mere speculation rather than historical fact.[10] It is difficult to conclude whether or not the referent of מַלְאָכִי in the superscript is an identifiable individual but this does not seem to affect interpretation in any significant way. In this thesis "Malachi" or "the prophet" is used to refer to the narrator. "Malachi" is also used to refer to the book. Whether the intended referent is the person or the book is clear in the context.

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[6] C. C. Torrey, 'The Prophecy of Malachi,' *JBL*, 17, 1 (1898) 1-15, citing 13-14.

[7] P. R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.*, (Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: SCM Press, 1968). R. Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary: New English Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 138. J. D. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW, 218 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993) 186-7; Nogalski, *Micah – Malachi*, 993.

[8] Hill, 'Malachi,' 612.

[9] Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 299. Petersen suggests "a date no later than the beginning of the Hellenistic period" for some materials in Malachi (such as 3:1a): D. L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977) 38.

[10] D. Stuart, 'Malachi,' in Th. E. McComiskey (ed.), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009) 1245-6. Nogalski, *Micah-Malachi*, 991-2, 993. Hill, 'Malachi,' 2008, 611.

2.3. Audience/Addressees

Scholars generally assume that some of the passages in Malachi are addressed to the priests and some to the people in general. According to Hill, 1:2-5; 2:10-3:24 are directed to the community as a whole while 1:6-2:9 is toward the priests and Levites.[11]

Tiemeyer considers Mal 1:6-3:5 to be primarily addressed to the priesthood while the rest (1:1-5; 3:6-24) also has them as part of the audience. Her argument is based on direct references to the audience, references to temple, intertextual links to 1:6-2:9, where the audience is undisputedly the priesthood, and comparison with other supposedly priestly passages such as, Mal 1:10; 2:5-6; Isaiah 58:2-4.[12]

As can be seen from the difference between Hill and Tiemeyer, it is not always easy to be certain about a specific audience. In this thesis, it is assumed that the audience is the whole community (cf. 1:14; 3:9) with the priesthood as the primary addressee.[13] A certain audience is specifically argued for within the thesis when it is appropriate.

2.4. Literary Form: An Overview of Opinions

The extensive use of the question-answer format sets apart the book of Malachi from the rest of the HB. Even though such a format is not entirely distinct, its consistent and extensive use throughout the whole book is unparalleled.[14] As prominent as it is, however, the question and answer format is not all about the literary form of the book.

Most scholars agree that Malachi involves a form of disputation. E. Pfeiffer suggests that it is a "Disputationswort." He considers Malachi as sharing similar features with other passages in the HB, such as Isaiah 40:27-31. According to him, Malachi is composed of six disputations: 1:2-5; 1:6-2:9; 2:10-16; 2:17-3:5; 3:6-12; 3:13f. Each

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[11] Hill, 'Malachi,' 2008, 613.
[12] S.-L. Tiemeyer, *Priestly Rites and Prophetic Rage*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 17-27.
[13] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 162.
[14] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 21-2; Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1248; J. A. Fischer, 'Notes on the Literary Form and Message of Malachi', CBQ 34 (1972) 315-20; R. L. Braun, 'Malachi: A Catechism for Times of Disappointment,' *CTM* 4 (1977) 297–303, citing 299 as cited in D. Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures about the Fatherhood of God*, Studies in Biblical Literature 69 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004) 161.

disputation begins with a statement by YHWH/the prophet to which the audience responds in question. The disputation culminates in an explanation and conclusion.[15]

H. J. Boecker argues that Pfeiffer's designation does not account for the whole book. Boecker does not believe that Mal 3:13-24 is a disputation. He maintains that discussion speech ("Discussionsworte") better represents the literary form of Malachi's discourses.[16] Pfeiffer's proposal, however, retains wide-spread support.[17]

There are other observations as well concerning the literary form of Malachi, though less acknowledged. Several scholars suggest that the book can be considered as a lawsuit.[18] It is O'Brien, though, who gives significant attention to the literary form of Malachi as a *rîb*, i.e., covenant lawsuit. She identifies as many as six features of which "indictment" and "ultimatum" are found in almost every section of the book.[19] The literary style of Malachi is also seen as catechetical,[20] hortatory[21] and the classical deliberative rhetoric.[22]

Furthermore, whether it should be regarded as primarily prose or poetry is debated. Glazier-McDonald treats it as poetry[23] but it is largely regarded as primarily prose.[24] Scholars also debate as to whether the form of the conversational style employed in the book is a mere literary device or representative of an actual interaction. The majority

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[15] E. Pfeiffer, 'Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi: Ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Struktur,' *EvT* 19 (1959) 546-568, quoted in Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 19; J. M. O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, SBLDS 121 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990) 57.

[16] H. J. Boecker, 'Bemerkungen zur Formgeschichtlichen Terminologie des Buches Maleachi', *ZAW* 78 (1966) 70-80, quoted in Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 20; O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, 57.

[17] Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 136. R. Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 299. Nogalski, *Micah – Malachi*, 994-5.

[18] E. Achtemeier, *Nahum – Malachi*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986) 172. R. J. Coggins, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi,* Old Testament Guides (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) 77. H. Huffmon, 'The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets,' *JBL* 78 (1959) 285-95.

[19] O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, 63-80.

[20] Braun, 'Malachi,' 297–303.

[21] E. R. Clendenen, 'Malachi' in E. R. Clendenen (ed.) *Haggai, Malachi*, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2004) 203-499, citing 221-2.

[22] D. C. Hall. 'A Classical Analysis of Malachi's Rhetoric: a Call to Faith, a Call to Fear' (PhD Thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001) 46-8.

[23] Glazier-McDonalds, *Malachi*, 3-6. See also E. Wendland, 'Linear and Concentric Patterns in Malachi,' *Bible Translator* 36 (1985) 108-21, citing 108.

[24] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 166-8.

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view is that it is literary than actual conversation.[25] But there are a few who think otherwise.[26]

While the reviewed opinions, particularly Pfeiffer's proposal, are widely accepted and are rightly so, there should be some way by which an attempt to explain the literary nature of the book can account for the varied features that prompted such diverse formulations.[27] In other words, it is desirable to explain the blending of not only such varied features as question-and-answer, disputation, dialogue, hortatory etc. but also styles such as irony and negations under a single account. In this regard, Petersen's proposal that Malachi is a diatribe-like discourse deserves some attention.[28] I will thus, in the next section, take a closer look at the Greek diatribe and show how its features are strikingly shared by the Hebrew text of Malachi, affirming Petersen.

3. Malachi and the Diatribe

For New Testament studies, Porter defines diatribe as "a dialogical form of teaching in which the teacher proceeds to knowledge by means of question and answer with students."[29] The Greek term $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\rho\iota\beta\acute{\eta}$ refers to the school and the various educational activities carried out there such as lectures and discussions.[30] Yet this is not what the diatribes are all about.

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[25] J. Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten übersetz und erklärt,* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1963 [4th ed.]) 203f as cited in Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 22; Fischer, 'Notes on the Literary Form and Message of Malalchi,' 316. Clendenen, 'Malachi,' 222.

[26] H. E. von Waldow, 'Anlass und Hintergrund der Verkundigen des Deutero-Jesaja' (PhD Thesis, Bonn, 1953) 28-36 as cited in Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 22. Other standard works that deal with the literary nature of Malachi include the following: J. J. Collins, 'The Message of Malachi,' *TBT* 22 (1984) 209–15; G. Wallis, 'Wesen und Struktur der Botschaft Maleachis,' in F. Maass (ed.), *Das Ferne und nahe Wort*, BZAW 105 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967) 229-37; A. van Selms, 'The Inner Cohesion of the Book of Malachi,' in W. C. van Wyk (ed.), *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege, 1975) 27–40; S. D. Snyman, 'Antiteses in die boek Maleagi' (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Pretoria, 1985); D. A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).

[27] Schimmel observes that each of the various opinions regarding the literary nature of Malachi note points of similarity between Malachi and possible sources its author depended on: J. E. Schimmel, 'A Canonical Reading of Malachi' (PhD Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2006) 14. For a more comprehensive description of the various literary styles employed in Malachi, see Wendland, 'Linear and Concentric Patterns in Malachi,' 108-21.

[28] D. L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1995). 31.

[29] S. E. Porter, 'Diatribe,' in C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 2000) 296-8, citing 296.

[30] S. K., Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57 (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981) 77.

Greek diatribes come in the form of fragments which have been identified and studied since the nineteenth century.[31] Many sources/fragments were recognised as diatribe but consensus is achieved for not more than eight of them.[32] Studies of the sources have brought forth a considerable understanding of aspects of the ancient Greek diatribe though this is by no means a complete understanding of all the pertinent issues. As will be discussed below, there are areas of contention as well as outstanding questions, but interest in this area seems to have waned as there is little significant work since Stowers' dissertation was published in 1981.

Scholars use three criteria to define diatribes. These are:

(1) The dialogical style they employ plus other stylistic or rhetorical features

(2) The appropriation of popular philosophical tradition

(3) The social setting: scholastic/public setting[33]

In this section, these three features of diatribes will be explored in some detail (3.1). Generalizations and observations made in this section will then be used to demonstrate, in the following section (3.2), that the book of Malachi shares all the features of the diatribe.

3.1.   Features of the Diatribe

In this sub-section, the dialogical features of the diatribes, their appropriation of the philosophical traditions and their social setting will be discussed in 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 respectively. A summary definition of the diatribe will be given at the end of the sub-section.

3.1.1. Dialogue and Other Stylistic Features

Dialogue is a typical feature of the diatribe. Almost all of the fragments of Teles, for instance, start with "a false opinion whose refutation provides the basis for the following discussion. The next 14 lines are a series of short exchanges between Teles and an unnamed interlocutor." The interlocutor responds with objections. Similarly, the

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[31] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 7.
[32] Ibid., 48: Teles (Bion), Lucius (Musonius Rufus), Arrian (Epictetus), Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Maximus of Tyre, Seneca, Philo of Alexandria.
[33] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 48-9.

dialogical element of the diatribe of Epictetus consists of "exchanges of dialogue and individual comments or objections by unnamed and fictitious interlocutors."[34]

The dialogical aspect of the diatribe was necessitated by the social environment (scholastic or otherwise, see I.3.1.2 below) in which it was employed. It was a Socratic method that enabled the speaker to communicate with the laity. In this sense, it was a counter example of Stoic philosophical argumentation which was far too difficult for the laity to understand. This dialogical style allows the teacher to communicate his opinion through question and answer. It has both ἐλεγτικός (refutation), the exposure of error, and προτρεπτικὸς (encouragement), the provision of inspiration to move on as well as "a positive model" to follow. The diatribe's dialogical element is different from the inquisitive dialogue of Plato in that it is dogmatic: its goal is "to point out error, to convince and to convict and then to lead one to the truth, to a right way of life."[35]

One of the most striking features of this pedagogy/polemic is its Socratic idea of moral inconsistency.[36] Every person wishes to be right. A person's error, such as thievery, is, therefore against his wish. However, he exercises these things for his own interest not knowing that he is actually doing what he does not wish to do. If the person is made aware of this, he will necessarily abandon the error. If not, nothing would stop him from doing it: "He, then, who can show to each man the contradiction which causes him to err, and can clearly bring home to him how he is not doing what he wishes, and is doing what he does not wish, is strong in argument, and at the same time effective both in encouragement and refutation."[37]

The diatribe incorporates a speech and a dialogue between the speaker and a fictitious interlocutor or opponent. The opponent challenges the speech or derives a wrong implication from it. The speaker then responds exposing the interlocutor's lack of judgment or moral inconsistency. The course of the exchange is instigated when the speaker/author "challenges, provokes, questions and simulates the participation of the audience." Among syntactic devices used for such instigation are questions,

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[34] Ibid., 53, 55
[35] Ibid., 56-8.
[36] Ibid., 56-7, 60.
[37] Arrian, *Epictetus*, W. A. Oldfather (tr.) 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1928) 2.26.1-4.

exclamations and imperatives. An exchange of questions and responses could also be used from the onset.[38]

The opponent is abruptly introduced, frequently in the second person, as anonymous or a known historical or mythological figure representing a negative persona. The objection posed by the opponent is hypothetical or expected. It is frequently introduced by the adversative, "but" and speech introducers such as "you say." It could be formulated as questions; and voiced by the author or clearly attributed to the fictitious interlocutor. Objections are "placed at major turns" in the discourse and "rejected with such expressions as "not at all!" or by no means"." Ironic imperatives and ironic hortatory subjunctives are frequently used and lists of vices may also be employed.[39]

The diatribes are paratactic and asyndetic in their grammatical style.[40] According to Stowers, they are records of actual lectures and discussions and non-technical instructions, not based on exegesis of the classics, such as Plato's dialogue, but practical lectures and conversations that probably followed them (Epictetus).[41] Some are notes of students of diatribe and may not contain all the words of the teacher (cf. Lucius and Musonius Rufus).[42] The diatribe is characterised by asyndeton, and as a result, coherence and progress of thought are left to be inferred from the logical relationship between speech acts as question and answer, imperative and question etc. Thus the diatribe combines syntactic simplicity and a wealth of expression.[43]

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[38] R. Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die Kynischstoische Diatribe*, FRLANT (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) 10-4 as reviewed in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 20-1.

[39] D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, Library of Early Christianity 8 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1988) 200-1.

[40] Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die Kynischstoische Diatribe*, cited by Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 21. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 200.

[41] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 54.

[42] Ibid., 58. This tilts towards the hypothesis that diatribes are merely oral rather than literary but the picture is more complex as some scholars posit that the less literary records and notes may actually represent a later, degraded form of the diatribe [cf. P. Wendland, *Quaestiones Musonianae* (Berlun: Mayer & Muller, 1886) in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 59].

[43] Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die Kynischstoische Diatribe*, cited by Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 21; Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 200.

3.1.2. The Origin of the Diatribe: Literary Traditions or Philosophical Schools?

The ancient Greek diatribe came to be recognised as a literary Gattung displaying features of dialogue and rhetoric in the work of Wilamowitz-Möllendorff after studying the fragments of Teles' diatribes.[44] According to Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, Plato's dialogue was initially created to counter the sophists' lectures (Lehrvortrage). As popular philosophers began to reach out to the masses, however, the dialogue alone would not do the job and a more appealing method was devised. Thus a blend of philosophical dialogue and the rhetoric, namely the diatribe, was born.[45] Subsequent works largely affirmed the nature of the diatribe as a literary genre.[46]

A number of sources of diatribes that were examined have shown a significant enough diversity to prompt later scholars to question their status as a genre. Some of the scholars contesting the nature of the diatribe as a literary genre cite the diversity factor to cast doubt on the existence of any common style let alone a type of a recognised genre that the sources belong to.[47] The majority of those scholars, however, continue to maintain that there is something common to the various diatribal sources. What they deny is that these sources represent a literary genre growing out of antecedent literary traditions.[48] They argue that the diatribe is not a literary Gattung related to a previous tradition and that the diversity is associated with the social setting in which it originated and developed. These latter scholars propose various solutions.

For instance, Halbauer proposes that some of the sources were used in schools and others, such as Dio, in public settings. Halbauer considers the setting for the diatribe to be one of the school. Schmidt compares the diatribe with the Roman satire both having similar purpose and traditions but differing in their social contexts. Schmidt believes that the diatribe was in a form of oral public preaching with topics of universal nature

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[44] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 7-8. U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Der kynische Prediger Teles,' Excursus 3 in *Antigonos von Karystos*, Philologische Untersuchungen (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1881) 292-319 as cited in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 7-8. See Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 48 for ancient sources that scholars established as diatribe.
[45] Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Der kynische Prediger Teles,' 292-319 cited in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 8.
[46] Such as Wendland and Capelle; Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 46-7. For a survey of Bultmann, (*Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die Kynischstoische Diatribe*) and other studies, see Stowers, 8-48.
[47] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 47.
[48] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 48, 75.

and delivered by cosmopolitan philosophers whereas satire addressed local issues and was written for a specific audience.[49]

Building on his predecessors such as Halbauer, Stowers argues that the sources demonstrate similar dialogical style and that they originated in and grew out of philosophical schools. Yet, suggests Stowers, they were preserved in different formats such as essays, letters, and rhetorical discourses. Later sources may have also altered or kept the original diatribe that their work depended on.

Therefore, the commonality in works of diatribe, according to Stowers, is that they are linked to "a rhetorical genre of the philosophical school which had incorporated a specific pedagogical tradition with its own style and methods." Their diversity can be ascribed to variation in personal situation, the various degrees and shapes of their tendency of evolution to a literary form and the diverse relationships of the sources to their school settings.[50] Stowers does not believe that the diatribe is a literary genre in the sense that it belongs to a certain literary tradition, but calls them "literary rhetoric or a genre of oral speech."[51]

Those who believe that the diatribe has a fixed format and is a literary Gattung (tracing its source back to previous works of philosophy) attribute the diversity in form to change through time. These scholars compare quotes of earlier forms of the diatribe in later ones and identify features that were either lacking or minimally present or significantly changed in the latter diatribes. They maintain that the uniting feature of the diatribes is that they are public discourses with the goal of bringing philosophy to the populace.[52]

Despite rejecting earlier scholars' claims that the diatribe belongs to a literary genre, Stowers, like earlier scholars, affirms that the diatribe incorporated philosophical tradition.

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[49] O. Halbauer, *De Diatribis Epicteti* (Leipzig: Robert Norske Bornen, 1911) as cited in Stowers *The Diatribe*, 28-9, 48. E. G. Schmidt, 'Diatribe und Satire,' *WZUR* 15 (1966) 507-15 as cited in Stowers *The Diatribe*, 37-8, 48;
[50] Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 76. According to Stowers, Plutarch's diatribes and those of Musonius Rufus may represent the movement from rhetoric or conversation to written texts, see p. 65.
[51] Ibid., 49.
[52] Represented by Wendland; Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 12-3, 47, 75.

3.1.3. The Social Context of the Diatribes

Scholars in the field suggest two social roles for the sources of the diatribes. Earlier scholars propose that the authors of the diatribes were itinerant public preachers of philosophy. For instance, one of the sources, Teles, is believed to be a teacher, his style a preaching, the function of which is to bring philosophy to the masses – he was seen as a wondering cynic preacher in streets and market places. According to Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, Teles, who would be a model for subsequent diatribes, was a wandering Cynic preacher lecturing in the streets and market places.[53] Capelle considers Epictetus one of popular preachers targeting the masses with moral preaching in the streets and market places.[54] According to the proponents of this view, the dialogical feature of the diatribe has its root in Socrates and Plato with its characteristic polemics (against the sophists) and serves the same purpose in the diatribe. The opponent and the target of the polemics in the diatribe is, however, a fictitious interlocutor.[55] They cite words and styles of Bionean sermons that they believe Teles drew on as they label later diatribes as sermons.[56] Yet, both Wilamowitz-Möllendorff and Capelle do not rule out the social role of the diatribist as a schoolteacher.[57]

Other scholars, such as Stowers, object to such a role as public preacher and suggest that the diatribist was a teacher in the philosophical school. The claim that Teles was a wandering Cynic preacher is denied on the basis of lack of sufficient evidence. These opponents argue that evidence shows rather "that he was a teacher of young men."[58] They also downplay the influence of Bion on later diatribes. Whatever is from Bion is then explained as indicative of the teacher quoting authorities: as a teacher, the diatribist used previous authorities quoting them or adapting their sayings to his situation. For instance, in at least one case, Teles' use of Bion involves parody. The dialogical aspect of the diatribes is part of the pedagogical method the teacher employs as he educates

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[53] U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Der kynische Prediger Teles,' Excursus 3 in *Antigonos von Karystos* Philologische Untersuchungen (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1881) 292-319, cited in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 8, 51.
[54] W. Capelle, *Epiktet, Teles und Musonius* (Zurich: Artemis, 1948) 11-13 quoted in Stowers 53.
[55] Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Der kynische Prediger Teles,' 292-319 in cited in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 8.
[56] Bion is considered one of the earliest diatribist. His writings are regarded by some scholars as one of the sources of later diatribes though this is rejected by Stowers. Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 50-3.
[57] Ibid., 9, 50-54.
[58] Ibid., 51.

young men. For these scholars, the diatribe was a set of philosophical discourses and discussions prepared by a teacher, not a sermon by a preacher.[59]

According to Stowers, within the bound of the school setting, the social motivation for the diatribes shows great variety. Some diatribes, such as Epictetus, "cover a wide range of situations within the school setting." Some indicate no specific situation; others are occasional discourses, such as a response to inquiry, address an individual with behavioural problems etc.[60]

To recap, the three features of the diatribe were explored in this section. The section will end with a more elaborate characterization of the diatribe followed by a brief comment. The following definition is adopted from Stowers.[61]

> The diatribes are discourses and discussions in which the speaker employs the "Socratic" method of censure and protreptic. The goal is not simply to impart knowledge, but to transform, to point out error and to cure it. The dialogical element of the diatribe was an important part of this pedagogical approach. The two major categories of dialogical features are address to the interlocutor and objections from the interlocutor. The dialogical element in the diatribe is basically an attempt to adapt this method to a dogmatic type of philosophy and its delivery. Thus, censure is not an aspect of real inquiry, but an attempt to expose specific errors in thought and behavior so that the student can be led to another doctrine of life.[62]

Initially only the first two criteria were used; the third criterion, the scholastic social setting, was suggested later.[63] It is not certain that this criterion would go undisputed since the social setting for the diatribes was initially thought to be the mass in the streets and at market places.[64] In fact, it seems difficult to be as neat as Stowers suggests concerning the social setting of the diatribe. There seems to be an overlap as, for instance, Dio of Prusa, even by Stowers' own assessment, displays more of a trait of a public preacher than a schoolteacher. Despite his attempt to depict himself as a follower

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[59] Ibid., 52-4.
[60] Ibid., 54-5.
[61] Ibid., 77.
[62] Ibid., 76-7.
[63] Ibid., 49
[64] Ibid., 51; Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Der kynische Prediger Teles,' as cited in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 51; Capelle, *Epiktet, Teles und Musonius*, 11-3 as cited in Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 53. Both Wilamowitz-Möllendorff and Capelle do not rule out the scholastic setting though.

of Socrates in his methods, Dio was not able to avoid being seen as a public speaker. In fact, he himself did not have formal schooling.[65]

3.2. Is Malachi a Form of Diatribe?

No significant studies have been conducted as to whether the ancient Greek diatribe has any influence on the HB.[66] This is understandable since the earliest extant ancient sources that are available for study are all post-biblical (the earliest possible sources, Teles belongs to the third century B.C though Bion, from the fourth century, could be seen as the earliest source).[67] However, any possibility of contact between the Greek diatribe and some part of the Hebrew Bible, particularly Malachi, may not be dismissed so hastily. First, the available sources of the diatribe are based on earlier sources which might be accessible to the biblical authors of the same period or later. For instance, studies have suggested that Teles used his predecessor Bion in his diatribes though it is difficult to be precise about the extent and nature of Bion's speech that he quotes.[68] These earlier documents either predate or are contemporaneous with the biblical literature.

Second, the post-exilic biblical materials, particularly Malachi, are likely to be influenced by foreign cultures, including literary cultures. The time of their composition is nearer to the time when the diatribe would attain its peak as a literary form as inferred from the available sources (see I.2.1). Furthermore, the exilic and post-exilic era provided much more access to foreign cultures with a higher likelihood of the literary culture being affected than it would have been previously. This has implications for a possible contact with the Greek literary culture that could affect post-exilic writings.

Third, on the one hand, the similarity between Malachi and the Greek diatribe as represented in the sources studied is too striking to be dismissed and, on the other, the peculiarity of Malachi's literary form in the HB may suggest that it has a precedent

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[65] Ibid., 60-2

[66] For a survey of such studies with regard to extra biblical Jewish literature, the New Testament, particularly Paul, and other Christian literature, see Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 12-24; 39-44.

[67] Ibid., 12, 53-4

[68] Ibid., 50-52, 54. One has to be cautious as to whether or not the original sources contributed to the style of the diatribe in the sources now known as diatribal.

elsewhere outside the HB.[69] Indeed Malachi has more in common with the diatribe than with any other biblical material. The question of such a similarity between Malachi and the diatribes while there is a recognizable difference with the rest of the HB begs an answer. The question of whether the author had some sort of access to such or similar sources needs to be answered.

Despite the scarcity of any attempt to explore the possibility of any relationship between the HB and the Greek diatribe, there are claims that Malachi's style has something in common with the Greek sources, including the diatribe. In an unpublished dissertation, Daniel Hall analyzes Malachi as a form of deliberative rhetoric. He argues that Malachi exhibits such elements of the classical rhetoric as *exordium* (introduction), *narratio* (statements of facts), *probatio* (argument) and *peroratio* (conclusion).[70]

In referring to the literary style of Malachi, R. Smith notes that "[s]ome have called it 'discussion.' Others call it 'Socratic,' or 'catechetical,' or question and answer style".[71] Verhoef also notes similarity with later Jewish and Greek authors though he chooses to conclude that "Malachi's style could rather be compared with the vigorous dialogue of the public orator."[72] E. M. Meyers and Fishbane refer to Mal 1:6-2:9 simply as "the diatribe."[73]

It is D. L. Petersen, though, who offers a fuller and more explicit description of the literary form of Malachi as diatribe. He proposes that diatribe is a "more fitting category" for Malachi. However, he later opts for a more qualified expression, "diatribe-like,"[74] not willing to identify Malachi's discourses with the Greek diatribes:

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[69] Malachi's departure from the rest of the HB in its literary form is a well recognised phenomenon. For instance, A. Graffy, *The Prophet Confronts His People*, Analecta Biblica (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1984) 104, quoted in O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, 58-9. Graffy argues against proposals that Malachi belongs to disputation speeches in the HB such as Isa 40:27-31 by pointing out basic differences such as the hypothetical nature of the interlocutors' speeches and the structure of the disputations.
[70] Hall, 'A Classical Analysis of Malachi's Rhetoric,' 2001.
[71] R. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 300.
[72] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 165-6.
[73] E. M. Meyers, 'Priestly Language in the Book of Malachi,' *HAR* 10 (1986) 225-237 citing 225, 231, 235; M. Fishbane, 'Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing,' *JAOS* 103 (1983) 115-21, citing 118-9.
[74] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 31.

"I do not claim that Persian-period Judeans invented the diatribe. Moreover, I am uninterested in attempting to demonstrate a lineal connection between Yahwistic and Greek cynic diatribes. Rather, the claim is one of generic similarity. Two societies in the eastern Mediterranean region used similar forms of literature to address important topics."[75]

In the absence of a reasonable investigation regarding the relationship between Malachi and the Greek diatribe, Petersen's conclusion seems safer. The characteristic prophetic mediation may also suggest that Malachi as a form of diatribe could be more of a Hebrew invention. According to Sim, "universal functions of communication give rise to some broad universal genres—poetry/song, story, description, explanation, exhortation, as well as riddles, puns, genealogies, parables, allegories, and song genres."[76] Sim also recognises that argument is a basic form of human negotiation, and diatribe in some form is likely to be widespread in human societies (personal communication). For the purpose at hand, whether or not there is a connection, it seems enough to say that Malachi uses a literary style that one may call a diatribe with all its characteristic manifestations.

In short, the possibility of having common sources (oral or literary) with the diatribe, the literary implication of a likely Judeo-Greek contact in the cosmopolitan post-exilic setting and Malachi's greater similarity with the diatribe than the HB, all point towards Malachi being some form of diatribe. Several scholarly observations, including Petersen's comments, corroborate this.

3.3. Diatribal Features of Malachi

Malachi displays many features that identify it with the diatribe. These include both the general defining features (dialogue, dependence on tradition and the social setting) and the more specific characteristics of language and style. Following, I will discuss these features and their particular manifestations in Malachi.

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[75] Ibid., 31, note 90.
[76] R. J. Sim, 'Genre as a Social Construct,' Ph. Noss (ed.), *Dictionary of Bible Translation* (in press).

3.3.1. The Dialogical Nature

The dialogical nature is as important and apparent in Malachi as it is in the diatribe. It has similar form and purposes. Particularly, the construction of Malachi's discourses in terms of speech and dialogue is strikingly similar to that of the diatribe.[77] The dialogue is set in motion when the speaker (YHWH) provokes his audience, almost always directly in 2nd person (plural), to challenge him: (see, for instance, pronominal suffix אֶתְכֶם in 1:2 and לָכֶם in 1:6; verb form הוֹגַעְתֶּם in 2:17). YHWH then responds in ways appropriate to his communicative intentions including the censure of the interlocutors' lack of judgment or moral inconsistency (Mal 1:7-8; 3:6-7).

In this thesis, it will be argued that in Mal 1:2-5, YHWH provokes and mocks his interlocutors; he then censures their erroneous thoughts and behavioural inconsistency in 1:6-14 through exchanges of questions and responses, ironic statements and denials.[78] A similar situation is claimed in 2:17-3:7a.

There is a difference, though, in the presentation of the voices (interlocutors).[79] Whereas in the Greek diatribe, the author introduces the opponent as his interlocutor, in the Book of Malachi, the prophet is a mediating voice that creates the stage for YHWH and his opponents (people, priests) to engage each other. He mediates each side in the dialogue and only occasionally intervenes in his own voice, always in support of YHWH.[80] Thus ultimately, the dialogue is between YHWW and his "opponents." In other words, the dialogue is embedded under the prophet's speech. In Malachi, it is the deity who is in dialogue with a human interlocutor through a mediator in the person of a prophet.

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[77] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 31.

[78] Lee discusses "Divine Irony" as one of various literary techniques employed in Malachi: P. B. Lee, 'Malachi's Eschatological Figures' Arrival Motif in the Gospel of Luke and Its Relation to other Gospels' (PhD Thesis, The University of Pretoria, 2010) 61.

[79] I assume that Malachi, as we now have it, is a product of one author without entering into the complex issue of original author/later composer distinction. At least, that the text as we have it has a final, probably redacted form.

[80] Speech attribution is sometime problematic as when a speaker expected to take the stage, i.e. to speak seems to use incompatible pronominal references (cf. Mal 1:9; 3:1c). This problem occurs in the diatribes as well (cf. it is not clear who Teles' reference is when he says "the teacher of the young".)

The opponents in Malachi are introduced in general terms with "but you say"[81] and the objection is hypothetical rather than real though the author could have thought the audience might have actually entertained it in their mind or at least their behaviour implied thus. There is a consensus that the people or the priests did not actually utter the words that are attributed to them but they are rather framed by the author. Objections to YHWH's statements mark turning points in the discourse and are always in a question format. These objections may represent ignorance, cynicism or wrong assumptions and are rejected by various means including ironic imperatives or statements, questions and negations (1:8, 9, 10). In at least one case (3:6a) such rejection is put on hold until after several verses (3:1-5), which in this thesis will be identified as comprising an ironic promise dominated by threat of judgment and featuring a list of offenders. Following the build-up, a rejection of the wrong mindset is clearly stated in a negative clause.

The paratactic form of diatribal discourses also features well in Malachi. Baldwin thinks that the book has no particular literary structure with different subjects arranged "apparently haphazardly" but also "there is a logical progression."[82] Baldwin's statement that there is no planned and orderly structure of thoughts may not be entirely correct as she herself admits that there is a logical progression. Nevertheless, it highlights the striking simplicity of juxtaposition, a strategy that the book shares with the diatribe.

The progress of the discourse as a whole is achieved by means of conversation in the form of question and answer (1:6; 2:10; 3:8)[83]. At some places relationships within a unit of discourse is simply inferred (1:9, 10; 3:6). The Malachi discourse has been rightly characterised as disputations, discussions or similar interactional piece. According to Baldwin, the "short sentences and direct style characteristic of Malachi are marks of the spoken word, so that, even allowing for a certain amount of editorial arrangement, the impression remains that the very words of the prophet are here recorded."[84] As Petersen puts it, it is a "stylised" presentation of lively exchanges.[85]

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[81] Similar question in 1:13 is in first person (shall I...) representing interlocutors' assumption that is obviously dismissed as indicated by the context and then strengthened by a pronouncement of curse in the following verse.
[82] Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 214.
[83] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 21-2.
[84] Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 214.
[85] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 31.

With schools and/or temple sermons as possible settings, one may conclude that employing diatribe in Malachi has the pedagogical purpose of expounding previous texts and traditions and communicating clearly and forcefully in order to generate desirable responses. It was meant to clearly communicate the need for ritual purity and moral uprightness and to forcefully challenge a range of audience to embrace the message and act appropriately. The move for a forceful message would include a refutation (censure) of deep-rooted ignorance and wrong assumptions that might have contributed, in one way or another, to the lack of whatever the author is calling for.

In this thesis, it will be argued that the author perceives, among other things, that Israel's self-understanding as a chosen people affected their judgment of the true status of their actual relationship with YHWH as demonstrated in their substandard offerings and other shortcomings. For instance, the feeling that was predominant among the priesthood in 1:6-14 is "it-is-well-with-us". The author employs a dialogical style allowing the audience to clash with YHWH to have their naïve optimism mocked and refuted and to learn that it was not actually well with them (cf. 1:2-5 and 1:6-14).

On the other hand, the optimism that the author feels to be unwarranted caused the people to question YHWH's sense of good and evil as they failed to grasp the reality of their strained relationship with YHWH due to their disobedience that only merited judgment (cf. 2:17 and 3:1-12). Thus the author creates a scenario in which errors in thoughts are exposed and the audience is convicted of the resultant ethical problems. The people must understand the status of their relationship that was marred by disobedience and take corrective steps.

The philosophical concept of moral inconsistency that the diatribe's dialogue is meant to address also has its parallel in Malachi. The idea that a person goes against his wish when committing an error is apparent in Malachi but this could just be part of the general understanding of actions and their consequences rather than a reflection of the diatribe's philosophy of moral inconsistency. In fact, for Malachi the motivation to overcome error is to be sought in the reality of human disobedience and divine judgment, not in the philosophical argument involving moral contradiction. The people and leaders of Judah failed to fear YHWH and are thus cursed and rejected (1:14; 2:2-3,

9, 12-13; 3:9). There was no need for the philosophical argument for a biblical Hebrew author, though the fact of providing motivations for moral correctness is a common denominator.

What looks more deliberate in Malachi in relation to the diatribal dealings with moral contradiction has to do with the provision of hope and solution. Having exposed errors in a way that is characteristic of the Socratic dialogue of the diatribe, Malachi points to hope and encourages the people to make a move towards it (2:1, 4, 16; 3:7b; 3:10-12, 19-24). Not only does he point out that there is still hope for the people upon returning to the right way, but he also offers a mechanism by which they can achieve it: speaking to one another (dialogue?). It is this that God pays attention to and it is those who do so that will become God's own property and escape his wrath. If so, dialogue is the cure; teaching is of paramount importance (3:16-18; also cf. the commendation of Levi's teaching and the contrasting situation of the priesthood of the day in 2:5-9).[86]

3.3.2. Appropriation of Relevant Tradition

It is long recognised that Malachi is peculiarly dependent on various traditions in the Hebrew Bible, adapting the contents to his peculiar situations. Several works have been undertaken to determine this.[87] The most recent and extensive work is that of Weyde who maintains that Malachi is an exposition and application of earlier traditions.[88] Some of these sources are easily discernible (for instance, the Esau/Edom tradition in 1:2-5). It can be concluded then that Malachi draws upon a large volume of earlier materials.

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[86] Mal 3:16 is interpreted in at least three ways. 1) The fearers' conversation was noticed by YHWH and their names and deeds were recorded on the scroll for YHWH to remember them (Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 338). 2) The conversation by the fearers gets YHWH's attention and the scroll is instructional and written for the fearers to enable them to distinguish between the wicked and the righteous (v. 18); (Nogalski, *Mich-Malachi*, 1061-4. 3) The fearers, in opposition to the sceptics in preceding verses, acknowledge that God hears and pays attention and the scroll was to record the identity of those fearers (Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1382-3). Petersen (*Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 222-3) holds that the scroll "addresses the problem that had arisen in the dialogue" (3:13-15?) and bears the identity of the fearers and serves both YHWH and the fearers to be able to identify them (the fearers). But Petersen is not clear as to what aspect of the dialogue is recorded and why the fearers need to identify themselves. Nevertheless his attempt to connect the book with the dialogue itself and the fearers may be in line with Nogalski's identification of the scroll's purpose as instructional intended for use by the fearers.

[87] Such as Fishbane, 'Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing,' 118-21; C. B. Reynolds, 'Malachi and the Priesthood' (PhD Thesis, Yale University, 1993); O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*.

[88] K. W. Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi*, BZAW 288 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000) 57-69.

Following his outline of scholarly works concerned with traditions used in Malachi and his own comment on such various traditions, Petersen concludes thus: "The author of these fifty-some verses brings to bear numerous motifs from the history of Israel's experience with Yahweh in order to engage and confront the people."[89] Fishbane analyzes Mal 1:6-2:9 as an ironic re-interpretation of the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:23-27.[90]

3.3.3. The Social Setting of Malachi

Similar or, rather, analogical social settings to the ones suggested for the diatribes can also be posited for Malachi. Petersen believes that the diatribe-like discourses of Malachi may serve as a clue to the social setting of the author. He points out the existence and activities of schools in post-exilic Judah and suggests that Levitical instructions may be preserved in Malachi (2:6-9).[91] According to Weyde, the superscript (Mal 1:1) is similar to בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה in 2 Chronicles 33:8 showing that "the prophet…is introduced as an authoritative interpreter of the traditions" and that "the message in this book originated with the teaching activity of Levites and priests in the post-exilic community."[92]

Scholars have also suggested that Malachi's discourses could originate from real sermons/speeches.[93] Both the clergy and the people are clearly targeted. Fishbane suggests the setting for Malachi's diatribe as follows.

> The *Misch*Gattung created by [the] interweaving of liturgical language with prophetical discourse thoroughly transforms the positive assurances of the former into the negative forecasts of the latter. One may even wonder whether Malachi's diatribe has its very *Sitz im Leben* in an antiphonal outcry in the gates of the Temple – one that corresponded to, perhaps was even simultaneous with, the recital of the PB in the shrine by the priests. Viewed thus, the mounting crescendo of exegetical cacophony in the prophet's speech served as an anti-

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[89] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 32-3.
[90] Fishbane, 'Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing,' 118-21.
[91] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 32.
[92] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 60-61, 69.
[93] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 22-23.

blessing, as a veritable contrapuntal inversion of the sound and sense of the official PB.[94]

As discussed above it is believed that the social settings of the diatribes were responsible for the form the diatribes assumed. These were pedagogical considerations as well as the audience's grasp of philosophical abstractions. The diatribe was intended to communicate clearly and forcefully. Understanding and conviction was sought through audience participation (dialogical) and simplicity of syntax (paratactic / asyndetic) and vocabulary richness (see above). The social setting also called for various topics to be addressed.

Just as diatribes do, Malachi raises seemingly disparate topics.[95] These different topics are brought together in a coherent way to form a bigger argument. Coherence is achieved in a paratactic fashion as is characteristic of diatribal discourses leaving logical connections to pragmatic inference with a measure of indeterminacy. Petersen affirms that the opening five verses (1:1-5) and the last part (3:13-21) are appropriate and meaningful.[96] But he suggests that the rest could be put in different orders. It should be noted, however, that a different organization would result in different understanding if an overarching theme is considered. In other words, though varied, the subjects Malachi raises contribute to the progress of the discourse so that bigger ideas can and should be derived from a string of smaller pericopes.

3.4. Summary

The diatribe is a recognised form of argumentative discourse in ancient Greek literature. Scholars have tried to elucidate it and propose the nature of any social institution underlying it. The diatribe is dialogical in style. It incorporates philosophical traditions and might have arisen from a pedagogical need in school settings or public lecturing. The book of Malachi bears close similarity with the diatribe raising the question of the nature of any link between Greek and HB uses. Accepting that Malachi uses a diatribe form of argument, similar features can be found, and probably similar social institutions underlie it.

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[94] Fishbane, 'Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing,' 119-20.
[95] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 33-4.
[96] Ibid., 32. Malachi has three chapters in the HB and this division is followed in this thesis.

We have seen in this section that Malachi exhibits features of the Greek diatribe. In the following two sections, we will briefly review existing literature on Malachi (4) and irony in the Bible including Malachi (5). A detailed review of more pertinent works will be done in chapters III and IV as part of the examination of texts under consideration (see section 1 above).

4. Works on Malachi

Works on Malachi can be categorised according to their scope. Some works treat the book in its entirety while others single out some aspects of it. The latter take up topics such as the Esau/Edom tradition and the priesthood. Some of the former (full-length works) treat the book as part of a larger corpus, such as the Book of the Twelve. In this section, I will give a broad summary of the contribution of these works to the study of the book of Malachi. A more detailed and focused discussion of their contribution will be treated at appropriate points within the body of the thesis (chapters 3 & 4).

4.1. Full-length Works

Works that treat Malachi in its entirety are mainly commentaries.[97] As stated above, a detailed review of any of these works will not be attempted here but will rather be systematically presented in the body of the thesis, i.e. chapters 3 and 4. As well as

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[97] Some of these are: A. E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*: A*n Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament commentaries (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012). A. E. Hill, 'Malachi,' P. W. Comfort (ed.) *Minor Prophets: Hosea – Malachi*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, 10 (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008) 609-43. J. M. O'Brien, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah. Malachi*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2004). P. L. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995). Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*. E. H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*: *An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994). Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. L. H. Brockington, 'Malachi,' in M. Black (ed.) *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Nelson, 1962 [revised ed.]) 656–58. A. von Bulmerincq, *Der Prophet Maleachi I: Einleitung in das Buch des Propheten Maleachi* (Tartu, 1921-23, 26). A. von Bulmerincq, *Der Prophet Maleachi II: Kommentar zum Buche des Propheten Maleachi* (Tartu: JG Kruger, 1929-1932). J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets: Zechariah and Malachi* (tr. John Owen, London: Banner of Truth, 1986). R. R. Deutsch, 'Malachi' in G. A. F. Knight and F. C. Holmgren (eds.), *A Promise of Hope - A Call to Obedience: A Commentary on the Books of Joel and Malachi*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1987) 61-120. S. L. Edgar, *The Minor Prophets*, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries (London: Epworth, 1962). A. van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophe̕tes* (Paris, Gabalda, 1908). D. R. Jones, *Haggai, Zecharaiah and Malachi: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1962). W. C. Kaiser, *Malachi: God's Unchanging Love* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984). T. Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets: Bible Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956). W. Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 1–8, Sacharja 9–14, Maleachi*, KAT 13, 4 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976). J. M. P. Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' in S. R. Driver et al (eds.), *ICC: Haggai, Zechariasah, Malachi and Jonah* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912, 61) 1-88; Smith, *Micah – Malachi*; Stuart, 'Malachi.'

commentaries, there are a number of PhD theses[98] concerned with the whole of Malachi some of which have evolved into full major commentaries[99] as well as some articles.[100] Some of full-length works treat the book of Malachi as part of a larger corpus, such as the Book of the Twelve, the Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi Corpus and The מַשָּׂא.[101]

4.2. Partial Works

A number of works that present a partial treatment of the book are concerned with various themes and texts in the book. Particularly relevant to this thesis are those dealing with the Esau/Edom tradition in the Hebrew Bible which is also present in Mal 1:2-5. Other such works treat the theme of priesthood (1:6-2:9 etc.), the nations (1:11, 14b) and the identity of characters in Mal 3: 1-5.

4.2.1. Mal 1:2-5

Works on Mal 1:2-5 can be categorised into two: those that treat the passage as part of the Esau/Edom tradition in the rest of the HB and those that are primarily or exclusively concerned with Mal 1:2-5.

Most of the works concerned with the Esau-Edom tradition emphasise other related passages such as those in Isaiah 34; Jeremiah 49; Ezekiel 35, 36 and Obadiah, making only a passing remark concerning Mal 1:2-5.[102] While they do not make any in-depth

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[98] R. D. Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi' (PhD Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1988); J. H. Faught, 'Malachi: God's Messenger' (PhD Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1953); B. T. Dahlberg, 'Studies in the Book of Malachi,' (PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1963); Hill, 'The Book of Malachi'; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*; S. D. Snyman, 'Antiteses in die boek Maleagi'; Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*; Clendenen, 'Malachi,' 203-499; Hall, 'A Classical Analysis of Malachi's Rhetoric.'

[99] Such as Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*; Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*; also Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy*.

[100] S. L. Mackenzie and H. H. Wallace, 'Covenant Themes in Malachi,' *CBQ* 45 (1983) 549–63. J. M. O'Brien, 'Judah as Wife and Husband: Deconstructing Gender in Malachi,' *JBL* 115, 2 (1996) 241-50.

[101] Nogalski, *Micah-Malachi*; G. A. Tooze, 'Framing the Book of the Twelve: Connections between Hosea and Malachi' (PhD Thesis, The Faculties of the Iliff School of Theology and The University of Denver, 2002). P. R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve* (GA, USA: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990). R. W. Pierce, 'Literary Connectors and a Haggai/Zechariah/Malachi Corpus,' *JETS* 27 (1984) 277-289. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*. P. L. Redditt, 'Zechariah 9-14, Malachi and the Redaction of the Book of the Twelve' in James W. Watts and Paul R. House (eds.), *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts*, JSOTSS 235 (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). P. L. Redditt, 'Themes in Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi,' *Interpretation*, 61 (2007) 184-197.

[102] For instance B. Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist: The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994. J. R. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, JSOTSS 77 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). C. C. Torrey, 'The Edomites in Southern Judah,' *JBL* 17 (1898) 16–20. B.C. Cresson , 'The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism' in J. M. Efird (ed.) *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honour of William Franklin Stinespring* (Durham,

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observation of the peculiarity of the use of the tradition in Mal 1:2-5, they nevertheless, bring a valuable contribution to its apprehension by locating the passage in the overall use of the tradition in the HB.

A few of those works dealing with the tradition in Mal 1:2-5 as well as elsewhere do devote a significant proportion of their space to the treatment of the use of the tradition in Malachi. These include published and unpublished dissertations and academic articles.[103] In addition to situating the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5 in the HB, these works give reasonable attention to the particular context of the book of Malachi and thus make greater contribution. Most, if not all, of the works that exclusively focus on Mal 1:2-5 or parts of it are of article-length.[104]

Works treating the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5 are mainly concerned with the question of the contrasting attitude towards Esau/Edom in the HB. They observe that Esau/Edom is treated negatively in the Prophets in contrast to the Pentateuch, particularly Genesis. The reason for this varies from the role Edom is believed to play in the exile event of 587 BCE and in the aftermath to Edom as a representative of enemy nations to a symbolic use of the name "Edom" in cultic setting.

4.2.2. Mal 1:6-14

Studies of Mal 1:6-14 are primarily concerned with the priesthood. These works address various aspects of the priesthood in the book of Malachi often together with other

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N.C.: Duke University Press, 1972) 125-48. J.R. Bartlett, 'The Brotherhood of Edom,' *JSOT* 4 (1977) 2-27. J.R. Bartlett, 'Edom and the Fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C.,' *PEQ* 114 (1982) 13-24. B. Glazier-McDonald, 'Edom in the Prophetic Corpus,' in D.V. Edelman (ed.) *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, SBLABS 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 23-32. J. M. Tebes, 'You Shall not Abhor an Edomite, for He Is Your Brother: The Tradition of Esau and the Edomite Genealogies from an Anthropological Perspective,' *JHS* 6, 6 (2006) 2-30.

[103] B. A. Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance: A Canonical Reading of the Esau and Edom Traditions' (PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2010). U. Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom: Studien zum Edomhass Israels im 6-4 Jahrhundert v. Chr.,' (Habil. Schr., Münister, 1975). J. J. Krause, 'Tradition, History, and Our Story: Some Observations on Jacob and Esau in the Books of Obadiah and Malachi,' *JSOT* 32 (SAGE Publications: 2008) 475-86. E. Assis, 'Why Edom? On the Hostility towards Jacob's Brother in Prophetic Sources,' *VT* 56, 1 (2006) 1-20.

[104] G. J. Botterweck, 'Jakob Habe Ich Lieb-Esau Hasse Ich: Auslegung von Malachias 1, 2-5,' *BibLeb* 1 (1960) 28-38 as cited in Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 170. S. D. Snyman, 'Chiasmes in Mal. 1:2–5,' *SK* (1984) 17–22; S. D. Snyman, 'Haat Jahwe vir Esau? ('n Verkenning van Mal. 1:3a),' *NGTT* 25 (1984) 358–62 as cited in A. J. Botha, 'Die Belang van Maleagi 1:2-5 vir die Verstaan van die Boek,' *SK* 21, 3 (2000) 495-506.

passages in the HB. These include PhD dissertations, both published and unpublished, and journal articles.[105]

Other studies of the passage investigate how the idea of the nations worshipping YHWH relates to the immediate discourse context and the book of Malachi as a whole. These are mainly journal articles.[106]

4.2.3. Mal 2:17-3:12

The passage in Mal 2:17-3:12 seems to have received far less scholarly attention, with the bulk of those available primarily concerned with the identity of the figures and their roles in Mal 3:1-5.[107] Some of these works focus on the relationship between the angel in this passage and Elijah in 3:22–24.[108] Few, apart from some commentaries, consider the interpretation of the text (2:17-3:12) as their primary target.[109]

5. Works on Irony in the Bible

In this section, I will give an overview of works on irony in the HB and in Malachi. I will then briefly comment on how these works view irony.

5.1. Irony in the HB

There are several standard works on irony in the Old Testament, the major ones being Good, Klein and Sharp.[110] Good is the first to attempt a considerable treatment of

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[105] O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*; Reynolds, 'Malachi and the Priesthood.' S.-L. Tiemeyer, *Priestly Rites and Prophetic Rage*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 1, 2. Meyers, 'Priestly Language in the Book of Malachi,' 225-237. Fishbane, 'Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing,' 115-21. S. D. Snyman, 'Maleagi 1:9 – 'N Crux Interpretum,' *AT* 2 (2005) 90-103.

[106] J. Swetnam, 'Malachi 1:11: An Interpretation,' *CBQ* 31 (1969) 200-9. J. G. Baldwin, 'Malachi 1:11 and the Worship of the Nations in the OT,' *TB* 23 (1972) 117-24. C. Stuhlmueller, 'Sacrifice among the Nations,' *TBT* 22 (1984) 223–25. E. F. Sutcliffe, Malachi's Prophecy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice,' *IER* 5 (1922) 502-13.

[107] Bruce V. Malchow, 'The Messenger of the Covenant in Mal. 3:1,' *JBL* 103 (1984) 252–55. P. B. Lee, 'Malachi's Eschatological Figures' Arrival Motif in the Gospel of Luke and Its Relation to other Gospels' (PhD Thesis, The University of Pretoria, 2010) 86-120. B. J. Shaver, 'The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: the Growth of a Tradition' (PhD Thesis, The University of Chicago, 2001). N. M. Waldman, 'Some Notes on Malachi 3:6, 3:13 and Ps. 42:11,' *JBL* 93 (1974) 543–49.

[108] D. G. Clark, 'Elijah as Eschatological High Priest: An Examination of the Elijah Tradition in Mal. 3:22–24' (PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1975). W. J. Michel, 'I Will Send You Elijah,' *TBT* 22 (1984) 217–22. Allison, 'Elijah Must Come First,' 256–58.

[109] S. D Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' *AT* 3, 11 (2011) 156-168.

[110] E. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965). C. J. Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible,* Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University

biblical irony in the Old Testament. According to Good, irony is "criticism, implicit or explicit, which perceives in things as they are an incongruity."[111] Good's study is concerned mainly with narratives: the creation narratives and the patriarchal narratives in Genesis, the narrative of Saul in 1 Samuel and Jonah. He devotes the rest of his work to the treatment of Isaiah, Ecclesiastes and Job.

Press, 2009). L. R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1989). Other works on irony in the Old Testament: Books: M. C. Hyers, *And God Created Laughter: The Bible as Divine Comedy* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1987). T. Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992). D. Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-Prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible*, BJS 301 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). W. H. U. Anderson, 'Scepticism and Ironic Correlations in the Joy Statements of Qoheleth? (PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1997). J. W. Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Whedbee, W., 'Comedy of Job', *Semeia* no 7 (1977) 1-39. Z. Weisman, *Political Satire in the Bible*, SBLSS, 32 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998). PhD Dissertation: P. J. Shelly, 'Amos and Irony: The Use of Irony in Amos's Prophetic Discourse, (PhD Thesis, Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver, 1992). E. A. Turner, 'Irony as Ideology Critique in Deutero-Isaiah with Special Reference to the Parody on Idolatry' (PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, RSA, 1995. B. C. Jones, *Howling Over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15-16*, Michael Fox (ed.) SBLDS (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Articles include: W. L. Holladay, 'Style, Irony and Authenticity in Jeremiah', *JBL*, 81, 1 (1962) 44-54. W. B. Wallis, 'Irony in Jeremiah's Prophecy of a New Covenant,' *JETS* 12, 2 (1969) 107-110. J. G. Williams, '"You have not Spoken Truth of Me": Mystery and Irony in Job,' *ZAW* 83, 2 (1971) 231-255. J. G. Williams, 'Irony and Lament: Clues to Prophetic Consciousness', *Semeia* 8 (1977) 51-74. J. G. Williams, 'Comedy, Irony, Intercession: A Few Notes in Response,' *Semeia* 8 (1977) 135-146. F. Landy, 'Irony and Catharsis in Biblical Poetry: David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1.19-27),' *EJ* 15,1 (1981) 3-12. J. C. Holbert, 'Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh: Satire in the Book of Jonah', *JSOT* 21 O (1981) 59-82. J. C. Holbert, 'The Skies Will Uncover His Iniquity: Satire in the Second Speech of Zophar (Job 20)', *VT* 31, 2 (1981) 171-179. F. C. Rossow, 'Dramatic Irony in the Bible with a Difference', *CJ* 8, 2 (1982) 48-52. Y. Hoffmann, 'Irony in the Book of Job,' *Immanuel* 17 (1983) 7-21. N. M. Waldman, 'Concealment and Irony in the Samson Story' *Dor-le-Dor*, 13, 2 (1984) 71-80. N. M. Waldman, 'Two Biblical Parables: Irony and Self-entrapment,' *Dor-le-Dor* 15, 1 (1986) 11-18. Thomas Edward McComiskey, 'Prophetic Irony in Hosea 1.4: A Study of the Collocation and Its Implications for the Fall of Jehu's Dynasty,' *JSOT* 18, 58 (1993) 93-101. Å. Viberg, 'Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony,' *TB* 47, 1 (1996) 91-114. I. J. J. Spangenberg, 'Irony in the Book of Qohelet,' *JSOT* 21, 72 (1996) 57-69. M. J. Klaassen, 'Persian/Jew/Jew/Persian: Levels of Irony in the Scroll of Esther,' *Direction,* 25, 1 (Frenso, CA, 1996) 21-28. M. D. Simon, '"Many Thoughts in the Heart of Man...": Irony and Theology in the Book of Esther,' *Tradition* (1997) 5-27. E. Wendland, 'Recursion and Variation in the "Prophecy" of Jonah: On the Rhetorical Impact of Stylistic Technique in Hebrew Narrative Discourse, with Special Reference to Irony and Enigma,' *AUSS* 35 (1997) 189-210. W. L. Holladay, 'Text, Structure, and Irony in the Poem on the Fall of the Tyrant, Isaiah 14' *CBQ* 61, 4 (1999) 633-645. H. H. Friedman, 'Humor in the Hebrew Bible,' *HIJHR* 13, 3 (2000) 257-286. J. Morreall, 'Sarcasm, Irony, Wordplay, and Humor in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Hershey Friedman,' *Humor* 14, 3 (2001) 293-302. R. Lessing, 'Satire in Isaiah's Tyre Oracle,' *JSOT* 28, 1 (2003) 89-112. J. A. Beck, 'Geography as Irony: The Narrative-Geographical Shaping of Elijah's Duel with the Prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18),' *SJOT* 17, 2 (2003) 291-302. C. J. Sharp, 'Ironic Representation, Authorial Voice and Meaning in Qohelet,' *Biblical Interpretation* 12, 1 (2004). B. E. Organt, '"The Man Who Would Be King": Irony in the Story of Rehoboam,' in J. R. Wood, J. E. Harvey and M. Leuchter (eds.), *From Babel to Babylon: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honor of Brian Peckham* (NY/London: T & T Clark, 2006) 124-32. D. R. Jackson, 'Who Is This Who Darkens Counsel? The Use of Rhetorical Irony in God's Charges against Job,' *WTJ* 72, 1 (2010) 153-167. Adam Miglio, 'Ordeal, Infidelity, and Prophetic Irony in Jeremiah 2, 1-9,' *SJOT* 24, 2 (2010) 222-234. K. L. Erickson, 'The Call to Prophetic Maternity and Matriarchal Irony,' *FJCSBSJU* 23, 1 (2012) 59-67; R. Ward, 'A Synoptic Irony?' http://archive.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_075_3_Ward.pdf, September 21, 2012.

[111] Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 30-31.

Sharp understands irony as "…a performance of misdirection that generates aphoretic interactions between an unreliable "said" and a truer "unsaid" so as to persuade us of something that is subtler, more complex, or more profound than the apparent meaning." Using her model, "Multiaxial Cartography,"[112] she explores irony in its various forms in the Hebrew Bible.[113]

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[112] Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible*, 28.
[113] Works on irony in the New Testament: Books: E. Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ* (NY: Harper & Row, 1964). P. D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta : John Knox Press, 1985). J. Jónsson, *Humour and irony in the New Testament: Illuminated by Parallels in Talmud and Midrash* 28 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985). J. M. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986). K. A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987). J. Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, SNTS Monograph Series 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). J. L. Ray, *Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts: The Paradoxical Interaction of Prophetic Fulfillment and Jewish Rejection* (NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1996). D. Adams, *The Prostitute in the Family Tree: Discovering Humor and Irony in the Bible* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1997). G. M. Feagin, *Irony and the Kingdom in Mark: A Literary-Critical Study* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1997). G. S. Holland, *Divine Irony*, (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania: Susquehanna University Press, 2000). M. D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (MN: Fortress Press, 2002). K. McDaniel, *Experiencing Irony in the First Gospel: Suspense, Surprise and Curiosity* (T & T Clark, 2013). PhD Dissertations: G. R. O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim* (Philadelphia, USA: Fortress Press, 1986). A. L. Damm, '"Speech Unhindered": A Study of Irony in the Acts of the Apostles,' (PhD Thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada 1998). S. Hamid-Khan, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, 120 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 75-85. Articles: S. MacComb, 'The Irony of Christ,' *BW* (1904) 104-109. J. H. P. Reumann, 'St Paul's Use of Irony,' *Lutheran Quarterly* 7, 2 (1955) 140-145. D. R. Fletcher, 'The Riddle of the Unjust Steward: Is Irony the Key?' *JBL* 82, 1 (1963) 15-30. W. Harnisch, 'Die Ironie als Stilmittel in Gleichnissen Jesu,' *EvT* 32 (1972) 421-36. G. W. MacRae, 'Theology and Irony in the Fourth Gospel,' in R. J. Clifford and G. W. MacRae (eds.) *The Word in the World: Essays in Honor of Frederick Moriarty* (S. J. Cambridge, MA: Weston College Press, 1973) 83-96. D. W. Wead, 'Johannine Irony as a Key to the Author-Audience Relationship in John's Gospel,' *AARBL* (1974). C. A. Moore, 'Mark 4:12: More Like the Irony of Micaiah than Isaiah,' in Howard N. Bream, R. D. Heim and C. A. Moore (eds.), *A Light unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Meyers* (1974) 335-344. J. H. Gill, 'Jesus, Irony and the New Quest,' *Interpretation* 41 (1980) 139-51. A. B. Spencer, 'The Wise Fool (and The Foolish Wise): A Study of Irony in Paul,' *NT* (1981) 349-360. R. M. Fowler, 'Irony and the Messianic Secret in the Gospel of Mark,' *Proceedings: ELBSMSBL* 1 (1981) 26-36. B. Hollenbach, 'Lest They Should Turn and Be Forgiven: Irony,' *BT* 34.3 (1983) 312-321. R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 165-80. Ch. Forbes, 'Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric,' *NTS* 32, 01 (1986) 1-30. G. Johnston and E. Homo, 'Irony in the Christology of the Fourth Evangelist,' in L. D Hurst and N. T. Wright (eds.), *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of G. B. Caird* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). D. Myers, *Irony and Humor in the Gospel of John*, OPTAT 2 (1988) 1-13. J. P. Heil, 'Reader-Response and the Irony of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22: 66-71,' *CBQ* 51, 2 (1989) 271-284. S. E. Porter, 'The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16: 1–13): Irony is the Key,' in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, JSOTSS 87 (1990) 127-153. J. E. Botha, 'The Case of Johannine Irony Reopened I: The Problematic Current Situation,' *Neotestamentica* 25, 2 (1991) 209-220. J. E. Botha, 'The Case of Johannine Irony Reopened II: Suggestions, Alternative Approaches,' *Neotestamentica* 25, 2 (1991) 221-32. J. P. Heil, 'Reader-Response and the Irony of the Trial of Jesus in Luke 23:1-25,' *Science et esprit* 43, 2 (1991) 175-186. D. Gibbons, 'Nicodemus: Character Development, Irony and Repetition in the Fourth Gospel,' *Proceedings: EGLMBS* 11 (1991) 116-28. R. A. Culpepper, 'Reading Johannine Irony,' in R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black (eds.), *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 193-207.

Klein sees irony between the opposing views of YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges. Klein argues that the shift in these opposing perspectives within the narrative is "a dominant structural device" in the book.[114]

5.2. Irony in Malachi

D. R. Blake analyzes Mal 1:1-5 as irony using a rhetorical approach, "the dialectics of guess and analysis" and citing evidences internal to the passage. He argues that "a tension develops in this initial paragraph that verges on irony and even sarcasm."[115]

The presence of irony in other parts of Malachi has also been noted. A number of commentators observe that Mal 1:8-9 is ironic.[116] However, this has been contested by others.[117] Fishbane argues that Mal 1:6-2:9 is an ironic reformulation of the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:23-27.[118] These works will be reviewed in more detail in chapter three of this thesis.

M. Schneider, 'Writing in the Dust: Irony and Lynch-Law in the Gospel of John,' *Anthropoetics* 3, 1 (1997) http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0301/home.html, accessed June 21, 2014. T. Thatcher, 'The Sabbath Trick: Unstable Irony in the Fourth Gospel,' *JSNT* 76 (1999) 53-77. H. Ito, 'Johannine Irony Demonstrated in John 9 I,' *Neotestamentica* 34, 2 (2000) 361-373. H. Ito, 'Johannine Irony Demonstrated in John 9 II,' *Neotestamentica* 34.2 (2000) 373-87. T. L. Garter, 'The irony of Romans 13,' *NT* 46, 3 (2004) 209-28. T. W. Martin, 'The Syntax of Surprise, Irony or Shifting of Blame in Gal 1:6-7,' *BR* 54 (2009) 79-98. L. Perkins, '"The Finger of God": Lukan Irony and Old Testament Allusion as Narrative Strategy (Luke 11.20 and Exodus 8.19 [LXX 8.15]),' in Th. R. Hatina (ed.) *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels*, *Vol. 3: The Gospel of Luke* (NY/London: T & T Clark, 2010) 148-60. G. D. Miller, 'An Intercalation Revisited: Christology, Discipleship, and Dramatic Irony in Mark 6:6b-30,' *JSNT* 35, 2 (2012) 176-195. E. Mouton, '"What is a Woman that You are Mindful of Her?" Aspects of Irony and Honour in Luke 7: 36-50,' *DRTJ* 5, 54 (2013) 221-231. B. Tabb, 'Jesus's Thirst at the Cross: Irony and Intertextuality in John 19:28,' *EQ* 85, 4 (2013) 338-51.

[114] Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 11, 13.

[115] Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 116.

[116] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 51, 54. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 181; T. Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, 518; also Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 28; Rudolph, *Haggai – Sacharja 1-8 – Sacharja 9-14 – Maleachi*, 262; A. S. Van der Woude, *Haggai Maleachi*, (Nijkerk: Callanbach, 1982) 98; A. Deissler, *Zwölf Propheten III: Zefanja – Haggai – Sacharja – Maleachi*, Neue Echter Bibel Alten Testament 21 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988) 322; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 226; G. J. Botterweck, 'Ideal und Wirklichkeit der Jerusalemer Priester, Auslegung von Mal. 1:6–10; 2:1–9,' *BibLeb* 1 (1960) 100–109 citing 103; Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 220; H. G. Reventlow, *Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Malachi*, ATD 25, 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1993) 141; Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 138) as cited in Snyman, 'Maleagi 1:9, 97'.

[117] For instance, Snyman, 'Maleagi 1:9,' 97.

[118] Fishbane, M., 'Form and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing,' 115-21.

Some scholars regard the questioning of YHWH's justice in Mal 2:17 as sarcastic irony.[119] Irony is also noticed in Mal 3:1, 6.[120] These works will be discussed in chapter four.

5.3. Conception of Irony in Biblical Scholarship

Most of the bulk of works on biblical irony does not clearly distinguish between situational irony and verbal irony, though they are aware of such a distinction. Sharp, for instance, maintains that "the phenomenon of biblical prophecy may be interpreted as inherently ironic even apart from particular ironies that are wielded by prophets as weapons in their rhetorical arsenals."[121] It is clear that Sharp is talking about two kinds of irony, the irony of phenomenon (situational) and "particular ironies". However, it is not clear what "particular ironies are" and thus what their difference is from the irony of phenomenon. Most of the observations made in these works are concerned with situational ironies.

Moreover, the hallmark of much of the works on irony in the Bible is that they follow the traditional characterization of irony in terms of contradiction (incongruity) between what is asserted and what is meant and/or pretension (that what is asserted is not what is meant).[122] There is awareness that this is a too simplistic characterization of irony. For instance, Culpepper maintains that to "say simply that irony 'consists in saying one thing and intending the opposite' or that it is 'the disparity between the meaning conveyed and the literal meaning of the words' does not adequately distinguish irony from metaphor, symbol or mockery."[123] Nevertheless, the essence of the characterization of irony, among biblical scholars, remains the same despite such an acknowledgment and attempts at elaborations.

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[119] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 127-8.
[120] D. J. Clark and H. A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, UBS Handbook Series on CD-ROM, Translator's Workplace, Version 5 (USA: United Bible Societies, 2003, 2005, 2008) n.p. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 243. Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 101. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 371.
[121] Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible*, 125.
[122] L. Ryken, J. C. Wilhoit and T. Longman III (eds.), 'Rhetorical Patterns: Irony' in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998) 726-7; L. Ryken, J. C. Wilhoit and T. Longman III (eds.), 'Humor: Irony' in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998) 409-10; E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, Explained and Illustrated* (London: Meessrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898 [reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968]) 807.
[123] Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 166. See also Sherwood who recognises that the notion of contrast does not always characterise irony: Y. Sherwood, 'Irony and Satire,' K. D. Sakenfeld (ed.) *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* 3, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008) 69-70.

The traditional understanding of irony that is characterised by the notion of opposition between what is said and what is meant has recently come under heavy criticism for its inaccuracies, restrictiveness and insufficiency in explaining irony.[124] In this thesis, the concern is with verbal irony according to RT. The RT notion of verbal irony will be discussed in the next chapter.

6. Chapter Summary

This thesis will seek to demonstrate and analyze irony in two passages in the book of Malachi, namely 1:2-5 and 3:1, 6. These passages will be analyzed in relation to appropriate wider discourse contexts in which other related speech forms will be shown to suggest an ironic reading of the passages in question. The RT account of echoic utterances will be used to define verbal irony, denial and echo questions.

The importance of the relative position of each of the passages for understanding the content of the book underlies the motivation for the study. So does the need for an in-depth analysis of the passages under consideration. The study also presents an opportunity to demonstrate the implication of reading the book as a unit and to test the heuristic usefulness of RT.

Despite a widespread consensus of a post-exilic date, it is difficult to be more specific as to when the book of Malachi was composed and any time between 515 and 180 BCE seems plausible. The identity of its author remains a mystery but may not be essential to its interpretation. Malachi's literary nature is unique in the HB with "disputation" widely acknowledged as the major literary characteristics. However, as discussed in section 3 above, Malachi is better understood as a form of diatribe. It is dialogical in style and heavily relies on previous traditions with its setting likely to be Levitical schools or cultic discourses.

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[124] L. Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 56–64. H. L. Colston and R. W. Gibbs, 'A Brief History of Irony', in R. W. Gibbs, and H. L. Colston (eds.), *Irony in Language and Thought: A Cognitive Science Reader* (New York/London: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2007) 3- 21, citing 4. S. Kumon-Nakamura, S. Glucksberg and M. Brown, 'How About Another Piece of Pie: The Allusional Pretense Theory of Discourse Irony,' *JEP: General*, 124, (1995) 3–21, reprinted in R. W. Gibbs and H. L. Colston (eds.) *Irony in Language and Thought: A Cognitive Science Reader* (New York/London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Taylor & Francis Group, 2007) 57-95, citing 59, 62, 89.

There is little study on irony in Malachi, the only major work being Blake's doctoral thesis, which recognises Mal 1:2-5 as ironic. Only cursory remarks are made on verbal irony in 1:8-9 and 3:1. These and other works on irony in the Bible characteristically employ the traditional account of irony as saying one thing to mean the opposite. Moreover, these works do not sufficiently distinguish verbal irony from situational irony.

As stated above (1, 5.3, 6), the thesis will employ the RT account of verbal communication, particularly its notion of verbal irony, denial and echo question in its pursuit of interpreting selected passages in Malachi. This account will be introduced and discussed in the next chapter.

II.   Theoretical Bases

The goal of this chapter is to introduce and discuss verbal irony, denial and echoic question from the perspective of a modern inferential theory of communication, namely Relevance Theory (RT). The chapter has five major sections. In the first section, I will present an overview of modern theories of communication so as to create a context in which RT will be located. RT's approach to verbal communication itself will also be discussed in this section. The following three sections will be devoted to a detailed discussion of verbal irony, denial and echo question within the framework of RT. A chapter summary will form the last section.

1. Modern Theories of Verbal Communication: A Historical Overview

Verbal communication has been the subject of much interest for millennia: from the earliest Greek thinkers, the sophists, to Saussure, the father of modern linguistics to the diverse contemporary schools of thoughts.[1] It has been pursued by philosophers and historians, rhetoricians and educators and linguists and literary specialists. Such is the scope of the study of verbal communication that even its slightest overview in this short section must be at best both sketchy and focused. What I will attempt to do is to indicate the general trend that studies of linguistic communication assumed starting from Saussure's groundbreaking modern linguistics to Grice's inferential pragmatics.

1.1.   The Code Model

The code model, also known as "communication triangle,"[2] sees verbal communication in terms of linguistic coding. Speakers encode their message/thoughts into a linguistic signal that is transmitted to the hearer. The hearer then decodes the signal to recover the meaning.[3] The designation "code model" is used by later theoreticians retrospectively to

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[1] R. Harris and T. J. Taylor, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought: The Western Tradition from Socrates to Saussure* (London: Routledge, 1989) vii, xi–xviii.
[2] P. L. Blackburn, *The Code Model of Communication: A Powerful Metaphor in Linguistic Metatheory* (SIL International, 2007) 27. J. L. Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971) 17–40 quoted in Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 27.
[3] Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 1; D. Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell 1980, 1985, 1991) 64; J. A. Edmondson and D. A. Burquest, *A Survey of Linguistic Theories* (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998) 95–96.

refer to a loosely related group of models of communication.[4] These models have their roots in ancient accounts such as Aristotle, according to Sperber and Wilson.[5]

The modern version of the code model was first promoted by F. de Saussure (1857-1913).[6] Saussure maintains that linguistic communication has two stages of process, psychological and physiological: a concept (c) generates a corresponding sound image (s) [c→s] in the speaker's brain (psychological) which is then vocalised (physiological) and transmits to the hearer's ear to be heard (physiological) culminating in the association of sound with concept [s→c] in the hearer's brain (psychological).[7]

Saussure's approach to communication emphasises structuralism even though he did not use the term as such.[8] He distinguished between *langue* (language), a synchronic underlying principle and *parole* (speech), a diachronic manifestation of *langue*. Thus it is possible to study language as a fixed principle separately from its particular communicative performances that are constantly changing.[9] Saussure's distinction

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[4] D. Sperber and D. Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (UK, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986/1995) 2; Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 1 (note 1), 27.

[5] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 5; Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, tr. J. L. Ackrill, Clarendon, Aristotle Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963) 43, quoted in Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 5; Blackburn, *The Code Model,* 2, 28.

[6] Saussure is widely considered the founder of modern linguistics. His work (F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, tr. W. Baskin (Fontana: Collins, 1974) was published posthumously in 1916. H. S. Straight 'Processualism in Linguistic Theory and Method,' in R. Harré and R. Harris (eds.), *Linguistics and Philosophy*: *The Controversial Interface*, Language and Communication Library (England, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993) 200.

[7] Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 35-55; see especially 42. Saussure, 1974, 11-2. A significant development after Saussure's model was that of Shannon and Weaver: [7] Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 13, 56-76; C. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949) 4-6. See Blackburn 13-21 for a list of other models along with brief descriptions and quotations from the respective works.

[8] Harris and Taylor, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought*, 178. Saussure believed that his approach to linguistic communication was capable of extending to include a whole system of communication, leading to the birth of semiotics, a study of signs: Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 16; Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 312; D. Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2002) 2. For more on semiotics, see also U. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976). M. A. K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (GB, London: Edward Arnold, 1978). R. Hodge and G. Kress, *Social Semiotics* (UK, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988).

[9] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 9. D. Chandler, *Semiotics*, 12-3. Harris and Taylor, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought*, 176-90. Saussure's synchronic-diachronic dichotomy is, at least in part, a reaction to historical and comparative linguistics, the dominant approach of the day: F. Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972) 5. Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 37. Harris and Taylor, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought*, 182.

between *langue* and *parole* set the path along which the structuralist approach to linguistics flourished.[10]

As either a reaction to or a continuation of the structuralist traditions of Saussure and Bloomfield (1887–1949),[11] a wave of theories of grammar swept through Europe and America.[12] Most of these, it seems, are concerned with explicating what is involved in the underlying structure of language vis-à-vis surface structure (equivalent to relationship between universal characteristics of *langue* and particulars of *parole*). Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar, for instance, identifies rules of phrase-structures that are used to generate deep structures which are then mapped onto surface structures (possible linguistic sentences). Semantic structures are, then, mapped onto surface structure.[13]

The code model emphasises the *langue* (pure form and structure of language such as words and sentences) at the expense of *parole* (the actual use of language in communication). As a result, its heuristic usefulness in explaining verbal communication would soon be challenged:

> This assumption…was publicly denounced as a fallacy soon after its first public appearance; celebrated linguists…, anthropologists…and sociologists…all were quick to point out that human communication very rarely proceeds in accordance with the strict rules of grammar. Pronouncing a correct sentence belongs in the realm of the impossible, not to say pure fantasy: real people speak

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[10] See Blackburn, *The Code Model*, 53-5; Straight 'Processualism in Linguistic Theory and Method,' 200-3; Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 7-8.

[11] Bloomfield is one of America's leading linguists of the twentieth century: see J. G. Fought, 'American Structuralism,' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) 1-11. Whether Bloomfield's structuralist view was shaped by Saussure is debated: J. E. Joseph, 'Bloomfield's Saussureanism,' *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* (CFS), 43 (1989) 43-53. L. Bloomfield, *Language* (New York: Holt, 1933);

[12] K. Brown and J. Miller, 'Introduction' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) xiii-xvii.

[13] Brown and Miller, 1996) xxviii-xxxiv; A. Kasher, 'Chomsky and Pragmatics,' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) 44-5. see also R. Freidin, 'Generative Grammar: Principles and Parameters,' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) 119-37. M. Atkinson, 'Generative Grammar: The Minimalist Program,' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) 137-47. S. J. Harlow, 'Generative Grammar: Transformational Grammar,' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) 147-64. N. Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1957, 2002). Chomskyan linguistics replaced Bloomfield's empiricist inductive taxonomy with a theory of possible grammatical process, i.e. universal grammar: F. J. Newmeyer, 'Chomsky's Philosophy of language,' in K. Brown and J. Miller (eds.), *CEST* (UK, Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 1996) 45-50 citing 46.

in ways that are rather far away from the strictures of the grammarians, yet they are often, if not always, understood correctly. [14]

In 1970s, various forms of cognitive linguistics with a common emphasis on the study of meaning in language analysis appeared against the background of Chomskyan formal linguistics. [15] However, it was the theory of inferential pragmatics that would significantly alter the landscape of modern linguistics that the likes of Saussure had pioneered.

1.2.   The Inferential Theory of Pragmatics

With the recognition of the limitations of the code model in accounting for actual speech (verbal communication), the need for a different approach became apparent. As a result, linguistic pragmatics, which can broadly be defined as the study of parole, [16] evolved to a full blown discipline within linguistics. Two earlier dominant and often overlapping pragmatic accounts are Speech Act Theory and Gricean Pragmatics. [17]

As a critical response to semantic truth-conditionalism [18] and exclusive focus on the informative aspect of the use of language, [19] Austin (1911-60) initiated a philosophical theory of language known as Speech Act theory. [20] He contends that words are used not only to state facts (constative) but also to do things (performative). He would later abandon the constative-performative distinction in favour of a performative nature of every utterance. [21] The basic unit of linguistic communication, according to Speech Act theory, is, thus not a word or a sentence or any other sign but rather the production of such signs. In order to regard a symbol or a sound as an instance of intentional

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[14] J. L. Mey, 'Pragmatics: Overview,' in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics* (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 786-97, citing 787.

[15] F. Ungerer and H.-J. Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (Harlow: Longman, 1996) x-xiv; D. Geeraerts, 'Introduction: A Rough Guide to Cognitive Linguistics,' in D. Geeraerts (ed.) *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter) 1-28.

[16] Mey, 'Pragmatics: Overview,' 786. W. Koyama, 'Pragmatics and Semantics,' in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 767-74, citing 767.

[17] Mey, 'Pragmatics: Overview,' 789-91. Y Huang, 'Speech Acts' in in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 1000-9, citing 1000.

[18] Huang, 'Speech Acts,' 1000.

[19] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 243.

[20] Speech act theory was refined and systematised by John Searle: W. A. de Pater and P. Swiggers, 'Austin, John L.,' in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 27-8, citing 28. Mey, 'Pragmatics: Overview,' 789. Huang, 'Speech Acts,' 1000.

[21] de Pater and Swiggers, 'Austin, John L.,' 27-28. J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*: *The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (GB: Oxford University Press, 1962).

communication, one has to recognise them as products of an act of speech performed by a human being.[22]

The speaker produces, say, a sentence to make her communicative intention be recognised by the hearer. The hearer, having heard or read the sentence, determines, from the meaning of the sentence, what the speaker is saying and, from what the speaker is saying, the force and content of the illocutionary act.[23] An illocutionary act consists of illocutionary force (type of act) and propositional content. Most of the sentence such as the subject and predicate forms the propositional content. There are many different types of illocutionary forces that a sentence may have including assertion, question, command, wish and promise.[24]

In 1957, the same year Chomsky's Generative Grammar was published, Paul Grice (1913-1988) also published his famous article, 'Meaning' and followed it with 'Logic and Conversation' in 1975. Grice's articles would soon change the landscape of linguistic research as they helped pragmatics firmly hold its rightful place within the discipline.[25]

Grice explains verbal communication in terms of intention and cooperation. According to Grice, linguistic meaning is equivalent to speaker's intention to bring about some effect in an audience through the recognition of that intention.[26] He also maintains that communication is made possible when there is cooperation between interlocutors as they adhere to certain maxims of conversation. Grice's general cooperative principle is as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you

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[22] J. R. Searle, 'What is a Speech Act?' in M. Black (ed.), *Philosophy in America*, (Unwin Hyman, 1965) 221-39, reprinted in S. Davis (ed.), *Pragmatics: A Reader* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991) 254-64, citing 254-5.
[23] K. Bach and R. M. Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1979) 3-18, reprinted in S. Davis (ed.), *Pragmatics: A Reader* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991) 231-41, citing 231-4.
[24] Searle, 'What is a Speech Act?' 254-64. For a general classification of types of speech acts, see: Huang, 'Speech Acts,' 2009, 1004. For a more detailed treatment of this, see J. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 1-29.
[25] P. P. Chruszczewski, 'Grice, Herbert Paul,' in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 318-9. K. Lindblom, 'Cooperative Principle,' in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics,* (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 151-8, citing 155.
[26] H. P. Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967/1989) 220.

are engaged."[27] Grice then identifies four specific categories of maxims that interlocutors follow so as to observe the cooperative principle. These are Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. The maxims constrain the speaker to be "as informative as is required" (quantity), "truthful" (quality), "relevant" (relation) and "perspicuous" (manner).[28]

The pragmatic programme of Grice and Speech Act Theory are a substantial break from the code model in that these accounts articulate linguistic communication as a matter of intention and inference rather than coding and decoding. According to Sperber and Wilson, Gricean and Speech Act pragmatics offer a successful description of speakers' communicative behavour and audience's inferential activities.[29] However, neither explain why communicators behave in the way they do. In other words, Speech Act Theory's categorization of illocutionary acts and Grice's principle and maxims of conversation lack natural or psychological motivations and are ad hoc rules.[30] Later on, Sperber and Wilson would claim that verbal communication can be explained in terms of relevance alone. In the next section, I will outline RT's explanation of verbal communication.

1.3. The Relevance Theory of Communication and Cognition
1.3.1. Relevance and Attention: Effort and Effect

Human cognition is tasked with the goal of "improving the individual's knowledge of the world."[31] Thus, on one hand, the mind is busy adding, refining and structuring information in areas of importance to the person. On the other hand, the resource available for such a demanding task of information processing is not unlimited. Thus there is a need for efficient processing of information through optimal allocation of

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[27] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 26.
[28] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 24-7. Grice's cooperative principle continues to be promoted and carried further by post-Gricean pragmatists such as Horn and Levinson: I. Kecske´s, 'Communicative Principle and Communication,' in J. L. Mey (ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics* (Oxford, UK: Elsevier, 2009) 106-9, citing 107; S. C. Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalised Conversational Implicature* (London, England: The MIT Press, 2000); L. Horn 'Towards a New Taxonomy for Pragmatic Inference: Q- and R-based Implicature,' in Schiffrin D (ed.) *Meaning, Form, and Use in Context* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1984) 11–42 as cited in Kecske´s, 'Communicative Principle and Communication,' 107. For a brief discussion of later proponents and critics of Grice, see Lindblom, 'Cooperative Principle,' 153-6.
[29] RT, inference, intention, descriptive: Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 21, 23-24; 243-4.
[30] Ibid., 32, 36, 244.
[31] Ibid., 47.

resources. Efficient use of cognitive resources for information processing means that only relevant information – information that makes the greatest contribution to cognitive goals at the minimum processing cost possible – is processed.[32]

Relevance is therefore defined in terms of effect and effort:

> *Extent condition 1*: an assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the contextual effects achieved when it is optimally processed are large.
> *Extent condition 2*: an assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the effort required to process it is optimally small.[33]

Intentional communication is guided by the principle of relevance:

> *Principle of relevance*:
> Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.[34]

The speaker, by the very act of employing a certain stimulus (such as utterance), pledges that it is worth processing. In other words, a speaker's utterance is such that it requires minimal processing effort for maximum cognitive effect (contribution to one's knowledge of the world). This guarantee of relevance is presumed and the addressee, assuming that the communicator is rational, believes the presumption. The utterance is, then, to be processed in the context of background information accessible to the hearer.[35]

The appropriate context is chosen from among potentially accessible contexts. The immediate context is taken to be a set of assumptions derived from previously processed information (such as a previous utterance) and remained in short term memory. The immediate context may then be extended to the wider context of long term memory and perception. The decision about the appropriate context is guided by the search for relevance.[36]

The hearer combines the speaker's utterance with the appropriate (chosen) contextual information to construct a set of possible interpretations and determine the intended one.

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[32] Ibid., 47-8.
[33] Ibid., 145.
[34] Ibid., 158.
[35] Ibid., 38-46.
[36] Ibid., 137-42.

This process involves forming and testing interpretive theses until the intended interpretation is arrived at.[37]

To recap, in ostensive communication, the communicator creates an expectation of relevance in the hearer. The hearer then searches for the relevant interpretation by processing the new information within a context that is available to him in the order of accessibility and stops when the expected relevance is achieved. In the next section, processing of an utterance will be discussed in more details.

1.3.2. Relevance and the Inferential Process: Propositional Form, Explicature and Implicature

A sentence produced by a communicator is significantly indeterminate (ambiguous) and thus cannot communicate the intended informative on its own.[38] Various inferential sub-tasks are undertaken by the audience to specify and recover the intended information.[39] First, the sentence which is an incomplete logical form of the utterance[40] is developed into a propositional form.[41] This process includes disambiguation of senses, assignment of references and enrichment.[42] Consider (1) below:

(1)   Mother: it will get cold later.

The child makes various decisions to enrich the utterance including specifying the referent of "it", the specific time indicated by the verb "will" and the semantic sense of "cold" in the current speech situation: "will" refers to a time later in the day and "cold" to chilly weather that he must avoid; "it" refers to the weather. The propositional form of (1) is thus (2).

(2)   The mother is saying that it will get cold later.

Second, the propositional form of the utterance is developed into explicature. An explicature of an utterance is "a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually

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[37] Ibid., 165-7.

[38] Ibid., 193. RT considers linguistic communication as part of the wider communication involving a variety of ostensive stimuli besides verbal expression. This thesis is concerned with linguistic communication (see p. 174-6).

[39] Ibid., 172-224; R. Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (UK, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

[40] A logical form is "a well-formed structured set of constituents" amenable to logical processing. See Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 72.

[41] Propositional form is a semantically complete logical form that is capable of being true or false. See Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 72.

[42] Ibid., 179-80.

inferred conceptual features."[43] Put differently, explicature includes both the propositional form and information entailed by the propositional form such as propositional attitude. The propositional attitude of an utterance is that of either assertion or otherwise.

Assertions are cases where the explicature is simply the propositional form of the utterance.[44] Example (1) is an assertion and its explicature, (3) is, therefore, the same as its propositional form (2).

(3)   The mother is saying that it will get cold later.

In cases other than assertion, the explicature of an utterance is different from its propositional form. Consider (4) below from Sperber and Wilson:[45]

(4)   Peter is quite well-read. He's even heard of Shakespeare.

The propositional form of (4) is (5).

(5)   The speaker is saying that Peter is quite well-read.[46]

Obviously, the speaker of (4) is not intending to assert that Peter is quite well-read. The explicature of such an utterance needs to be fleshed out in context. The audience infers that the speaker in (4) is simply saying that Peter is quite well-read *without* asserting it. She may be, for instance, making fun of Peter who sees himself as well-read. In this case, the explicature of (4) is something like (6).

(6)   The speaker is mocking that Peter is quite well read.

Similarly, the propositional form of (7) is (8) and its explicature (9).

(7)   Is Jill coming to the party?
(8)   Jill is coming to the party.
(9)   The speaker is asking whether it is true that Jill is coming to the party.[47]

How could utterances like (4) be relevant to the audience? Or from the point view of the communicator, what is the intended interpretation? The utterance in (4) is relevant, not as a description of a state of affairs (how well-read Peter is), but as an interpretation of

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[43] Ibid., 181-2
[44] Ibid., 180.
[45] Ibid., 224-5
[46] Ibid., 225
[47] Ibid., 225.

another utterance or thought (6). Similarly, utterance (7) is relevant as an interpretation of desirable answers (9), not as an assertion.

Third, the explicatutre of the utterance may be used as input together with appropriate contextual information to arrive at an intended interpretation, i.e., to derive contextual implications also known as *implicatures*. Whereas explicature is the development of the logical form of the utterance, implicature is totally inferred.[48] The implicature of the utterance in (1) above, for example, could be (10).

(1)   Mother: it will get cold.

(10)   Child: I need to get a warm clothing.

1.3.3. Relevance and Style: Poetic Effect

A communicator may intend to communicate only one specific implicature. In the case of (1) above, for instance, (10) is the only intended implicature. There is nothing that indicates that the speaker is encouraging the hearer to derive more implicatures from her utterance.

Alternatively, a communicator may intend to communicate a wide range of implicatures.[49] The example in (4) has no particularly strong implicature. The relevance of such utterances is achieved, not by a particularly strong implicature but by a number of weakly communicated implicatures (as is the case with non-literal expressions). The contextual (cognitive) effect of such implicatures is not to be found in extending the audience's knowledge but in affecting their emotions. Such effects are called poetic effect.[50]

As well as implicatures, a communicator may achieve poetic effect through style. Style is guided by relevance.[51] Some styles are commonplace and require less processing effort whereas others optimise relevance through a deliberate increase in processing effort. The figure of parallelism is one such style.

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[48] Ibid., 181-2.
[49] Ibid., 222. D. Blakemore, *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics* (Oxford, UK: 1992) 171-2.
[50] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 222.
[51] Ibid., 217-24; see particularly, 219.

In a figure of style where there are clear syntactic, semantic and phonological parallelisms, the hearer's natural tendency is to reduce processing effort by looking for correspondence in propositional form and implicatures.[52]

(11)   Mary went on holiday to the mountains, Joan to the sea, and Lily to the country.[53]

It is not difficult to enrich the last two clauses in (11) with "went on holiday" from the first clause. In the case of such utterances, no special stylistic effect is intended. Relevance is achieved by keeping processing cost at minimum.

Contrastively, in (12) and (13) a syntactic parallelism which is not matched by semantic parallelism triggers a search for relevance which leads to poetic effect.[54]

(12)   Mary lives in Oxford, Joan in York, and Lily in a skyscraper.

(13)   Mary came with Peter, Joan with Bob, and Lily with a sad smile on her face.[55]

It is not so easy to interpret the third clause in (12) and more so in (13). In the case of such utterances, processing effort increases and with it expectation for higher relevance. The relevance achieved is, then, in terms of many but weak cognitive effects or rather an emotive affect. Just as the case with figures of speech, the enhanced imaginative effort of the audience is rewarded through poetic effect.

This same principle works for ironic garden-pathing. The communicator deliberately misleads the audience to derive a mistaken implication from her utterance. The result is a reanalysis which is forced by the information given in subsequent utterances. The reanalysis causes more processing effort and thus more relevance. The example given in (4) above and repeated below in (14) is a case of ironic garden-path.[56]

(14)   Peter is quite well-read. He's even heard of Shakespeare.

The reader or hearer of (14) would understand the first half of the utterance as truth-conditional. If the audience is familiar with Peter's situation, they may conclude the speaker is wrong or even lying. If they are not in the knowledge of Peter, they may take the statement as true. The audience reanalyzes the utterance as ironic only upon processing the second half. The search for relevance and implicature derived from such

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[52] Ibid., 222.

[53] Ibid., 222.

[54] Ibid., 223-4.

[55] Ibid., 222.

[56] Ibid., 242. See also R. Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' *JP* 25, 3 (1996) 309-330, particularly 312.

a poetic use of the utterance is thus much higher than it would be if a descriptive utterance is used.

To recap, I have sketched RT's account of how an audience processes a communicator's utterances. The logical form of an utterance is developed into a propositional form through disambiguation, reference assignment and enrichment. An explicature is then drawn from the propositional form by identifying the propositional attitude of the utterance. Finally, explicature is interpreted in relevant context to yield contextual implications or implicatures which may be strong or weak. The effect of weak implicatures is poetic. Special styles such as parallelism and garden-pathing also result in extra weak implicatures and poetic effect.

I will now look at RT's notion of how communicators make use of utterances. I will start with a brief discussion of how RT categorises utterances. The discussion will lead to RT's notion of verbal irony, denial and echo question which will then be explored in detail in subsequent sections.

1.3.4. Echoic Metarepresentations

Communicators have many different intentions when they make utterances.[57] An utterance may be used to describe a state of affairs. Such utterances are known as *descriptive*. Descriptive utterances are intended to communicate a truth-conditional proposition and are evaluated as true or false.[58] Alternatively, an utterance may represent the speaker's thought about another utterance or even another thought. Such utterances are interpretations of other thoughts or utterance and are, therefore, classified as *interpretive*.[59] Interpretive utterances are also known as *metarepresentations* because they represent other representations. An interpretive utterance, i.e., a

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[57] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 224-31.
[58] Ibid., 228.
[59] Ibid., 229. The speaker's utterance is an interpretation of the previous or projected thought or utterance because there is some sort of construal on the part of the speaker regarding the thought or utterance she is representing; re-presentation, in its more technical designation, metarepresentation of a previous thought essentially involves some sort of treatment by the speaker. The speaker may choose to represent the utterance verbatim as it is or in a completely different form with the resemblance merely that of their desired contextual implication, i.e. content.

metarepresentation, is assessed for its faithfulness in representing the original utterance or thought, i.e., how closely it resembles the interpreted representation.[60]

(15)   A: What did Susan say?

        B: You've dropped your purse.[61]

        B2: "You've dropped your purse"

B's utterance in (15) is descriptive: it is intended to inform A of the fact that she has dropped her purse.[62] B2's utterance is interpretive: it is intended to report what Susan said. B2's utterance is a representation of another representation or simply, a metarepresentation.

(16)   "Shut up" is rude.[63]

The utterance in (16) is an interpretation (representation) of an abstract utterance type, "shut up".

Some interpretive utterances represent utterances or thoughts that are attributed to someone other than the speaker at the current time. This group of utterances is thus called *attributive*.[64] B2's utterance in (15) is, for instance, attributive: it is attributed to Susan. The utterance in (16) is not intended to attribute "shut up" to any other person.

Attributive utterances can be used in two ways. They may provide information about the content of the original thought or utterance. For instance, a reported speech, such as B2 in (15), communicates information about the content of the original utterance or thoughts it reports.[65] Alternately, attributive utterances may communicate a speaker's attitude to the original utterance or thought and to those who entertain them.

(17)   Peter: That was a fantastic film.

[60] Ibid., 228-9.

[61] A and B are from R. Blass, *Relevance Relations in Discourse: A Study with Special Reference to Sissala* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 22.

[62] Note that in the example, B is not answering the question.

[63] D. Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' in D. Wilson and D. Sperber (eds.), *Meaning and Relevance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 230-58, citing 232.

[64] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 229, 230, 238. D. Wilson and D. Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' in D. Wilson and D. Sperber (eds.) *Meaning and Relevance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 123-45, citing 128. The utterance or thought that the speaker represents may be someone else's or her own that she previously entertained. For more detail and non-attributive interpretive utterances see pp. 229-31. "Utterances can be used interpretively to represent utterance types or thoughts which are worth considering for their intrinsic properties, and not because they can be attributed... on a more fundamental level, *every* utterance is used to represent a thought of the speaker's" (emphasis authors').

[65] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 238.

(18)   Mary: a. [*happily*] Fantastic.

b. [*puzzled*] Fantastic?

c. [*scornfully*] Fantastic![66]

Mary's utterances in (18) are attributed to Peter (17) and express her agreement (18a), bafflement (18b) and dissociation from the utterance (18c). Attributively used utterances with the intention of communicating an attitude of one sort or another are said to be *echoic*.[67] Verbal irony, echo question and denial are echoic metarepresentations.[68]

The range of attitudes the speaker may express in an echoic metarepresentation extends from acceptance and endorsement through doubt and scepticism to outright rejection or denial.[69] Echoic use can be either formally indicated or tacit. Utterances may echo a thought expressed within a context of a particular conversation such as a previous utterance. Utterances may also communicate the attitude of a speaker to a further removed utterance or unexpressed thought that are less easily identifiable.[70] Echoic utterances (other attributive utterances as well) can be attributed to individuals, social groups or people as a whole and may represent norms and expectations, beliefs and values, hope and aspirations, etc.[71]

Echoic utterances (and more generally attributive utterances) do not have to be identical (in content or form) with the thought or utterance they attribute. Rather, they need to resemble the attributed thought or utterance to a certain degree, decided in context. Resemblance is achieved as far as sufficient logical or contextual properties are shared. Moreover, in echoic utterances, unlike other attributed utterances, it is possible for the speaker to express her attitude to just a part of the attributed utterance or thought not to the whole proposition. In effect, the echoic utterance will have an attitude that is different from the original as well as a less-than-identical propositional form.[72]

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[66] Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' 249.

[67] Note that the term "echo" is employed in RT differently from the way it is used by the majority of biblical scholarship. The major difference is that in RT, the term is restricted to the communication of attitude. Also in RT, the relationship of the echoed thought to its source need not be verbatim to any extent.

[68] Sperber and Wilson. *Relevance*, 238; Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 128-30.

[69] Ibid., 130

[70] Ibid., 129-30;

[71] Ibid., 130;

[72] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 228-9; Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 131.

1.4. Summary

In this section, I have given a brief overview of theories of verbal communication. I have also discussed RT notion of verbal communication in some detail. I have particularly outlined how the notion of relevance guides utterance production and interpretation and explored the RT notion of echoic metarepresentations, namely irony, denial and echo questions. In the following three sections, I will pursue RT's account of three echoically used utterances, namely verbal irony, denial (metalinguistic negation) and echo questions in greater detail.

2. The Echoic Account of Verbal Irony

The popular concept of irony has come to mean anything odd, strange or paradoxical. This is evident from the everyday use of the word "ironic" or "ironical" to refer to such situations.[73] From antiquity to the present, the concept has also been personified (as in Socratic irony), utilised in the art of rhetoric and drama (dramatic irony) and in philosophy to explain the universe (as in Romantic irony) often involving conflicting views (see 2.1. below). As a result of such divergent views and applications, the concept of irony has been perceived as elusive, and works dealing with the subject viewed with suspicion.[74]

Yet, while it should be acknowledged that the notion of irony is not easy to explain, such a resignation is not necessary. Part of the problem as expressed above seems to have to do with attempting to offer a unified account of unrelated phenomena. The problem is well captured in the following words: "The subtle weaving and unravelling of irony in literature and in life are matters of infinite gradations, and no amount of terminology will encompass them all or receive universal acceptance."[75] D. C. Muecke categorises all the phenomena referred to as irony in one of two major classes: intentional/instrumental and observed. According to Muecke, instrumental irony

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[73] R. W. Burchfield, *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage* (UK, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 414; O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*, 11.
[74] Burchfield, *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, 415; O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*, 11.
[75] Burchfield, *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, 415.

involves an intentional use of language to achieve a purpose.[76] This thesis is exclusively concerned with verbal irony.

In this section, I will explore the RT account of verbal irony. I will start by looking at the traditional approach and the Gricean theory.

2.1.   Previous Accounts: Traditional & Gricean

Verbal irony has been conceived since antiquity in rhetorical terms as a trope saying one thing and meaning the opposite.[77] In the Middle Ages, irony received a rather negative assessment to the point where ironical works were perceived as lies.[78] This was to be countered later as the return to the study of the Classics during the Renaissance brought about a renewed interest in irony as well. Most of the work during this era employed the techniques of irony as opposed to explaining the concept itself. Understandably, the same notion of verbal irony as figuratively saying the opposite of the literal meaning resurfaced in the few studies produced during this time.[79]

The rhetorical approach to irony goes off stage when Romanticism takes over in Europe as a dominant world view and studies of irony assume a heavily philosophical tone until as recently as the nineteenth century. The nature of irony as primarily rhetorical is overshadowed as the concept is given a whole new dimension to the extent that one could conceive of "all the world as an ironic stage and all mankind as merely players." Notable works on irony during this time include that of Schlegel, Hegel and Kierkegaard.[80] However, a nuanced version of the rhetorical Classical definition with its characteristic dichotomy of literal and figurative meanings is back since and persists through contemporary literary accounts of irony.[81] D. C. Muecke, for instance, defines

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[76] D. C. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic* (London, England: Methuen, 1970/1982) 19.
[77] G. P. Goold (ed.), E. H. Butler (tr.), *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian With an English Translation* 3 (London: Heinemann, 1921) 333 as cited in M. A. R. Moneva, 'Towards a Historical Synthesis of the Concept of Irony' *Odisea* 1 (2001) 101-20, citing 103. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic*, 16.
[78] D. Knox, *Ironia: Medieval and Reinaissance Ideas on Irony* (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 7 as cited in Moneva, 'Towards a Historical Synthesis of the Concept of Irony,' 103.
[79] Moneva, 'Towards a Historical Synthesis of the Concept of Irony,' 104; Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic*, 16-8.
[80] Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic*, 19; Moneva, 'Towards a Historical Synthesis of the Concept of Irony,' 104-5.
[81] D. C. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic*, 31.

verbal irony as something said 'in order to have it rejected as false, mal à propos, one-sided etc.'[82]

In spite of various nuances and elaborations[83] by different scholars, the essence of the traditional approach to irony remains the difference between what is said and what is actually meant. Generally, scholars do not even specify what the distinction is about and vaguely alternate between general discrepancy and specific contradiction. For instance, Kierkegaard does not seem to distinguish between the two. According to Kierkegaard, it is "the most common form of irony to say something earnestly that is not meant in earnest.[84] Yet, Kierkegaard considers it "…essential for irony to have an external side that is opposite to the internal…"[85]

Others acknowledge that what is said is not always the opposite of what is meant and opt for the rather general characterization: "Irony is often said to be a figure in which the true sense contradicts the literal meaning. But in Swift's subtler irony the meaning need not be opposite exactly, and can be very elusive." [86] However, while the notion of contradiction is too narrow to represent all the data, a more general characterization such as, saying one thing and meaning something else also has its own problem, as Booth admits, in that it does not distinguish irony from other non-literal expressions in which the communicator says one thing and means another.[87]

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[82] D. C. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic*, 56. W. C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975) 21; Ryken et al, 'Humor: Irony,' 409.

[83] For instance Booth suggests four criteria for identifying what he calls "stable irony" which seems to correspond to verbal irony: intended, covert (meaning different from surface meaning), stable, finite. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 5-6. Others suggest that the relationship between what is said and its meaning is more than just a difference. See for example, Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 57. According to Hutcheon, the unsaid challenges the said.

[84] S. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (ed., tr. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong; Chichester, UK: Princeton University Press, 1989) 248. Kierkegaard's work is highly philosophical. Its purpose is to define the concept of irony and see if the life of the renown Greek philosopher, Socrates, as depicted by Xenophon, Plato and Aristophanes (9-153) and others (157-237) could fit into the concept of irony (cf. p. 141) as defined by Kierkegaard himself and other philosophers (241- 71). As one expects, Kierkegaard's concern goes beyond verbal irony to include various phenomena he considers ironic.

[85] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 256.

[86] Burchfield, *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, 415. J. S. Swift, 'A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of the Poor People from being a Burden to their Parents or the Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Public,' 1729 in L. C. Daley (ed.), *A Modest Proposal and Other Prose* (Barnes & Noble, 2004) 226-35.

[87] Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 7-8.

Wilson and Sperber dismiss this classical definition as insufficient, saying it does not account for "the function fulfilled by using a literal meaning to convey a figurative meaning and a cognitively plausible procedure for deriving figurative meanings from literal ones"[88]

Grice's account of irony presupposes that the classical definition, which is centred on the idea of contradictoriness between the ironical utterance and what it is intended to communicate, is accurate.

> X, with whom A has been on close terms until now, has betrayed a secret of A's to a business rival. A and his audience both know this. A says *X is a fine friend*. (…So, unless A's utterance is entirely pointless, A must be trying to get across some other proposition than the one he purports to be putting forward. This must be some obviously related proposition; the most obviously related proposition is the contradictory of the one he purports to be putting forward).[89]

According to Grice, although communicators are required to observe the cooperative principle and maxims of conversation, there are certain occasions when they violate some maxims. Such occasions "involve exploitation, that is, a procedure by which a maxim is flouted for the purpose of getting in a conversational implicature by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech."[90] Verbal irony belongs, together with figures of speech such as metaphor, to the sub-category of utterances in which the communicator flouts the first maxim of quality: "do not say what you believe to be false."[91]

For Grice**,** therefore, ironical utterances, as any other figure of speech, are conversational implicatures achieved by deliberately violating the maxim of truthfulness. Only what specific truth is violated seems to distinguish irony from other figures of speech: Verbal irony is achieved by deliberately violating what one believes to be true whereas metaphor, for instance, involves a violation of category. By using an ironical utterance, just like any figure of speech, the communicator "makes as if to say".[92]

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[88] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 124.
[89] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 34.
[90] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 30, 33.
[91] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 33, 34, 27.
[92] For a critical analysis and clarification of issues involved in the notion of "making as if to say," see J. Garmendia, 'A Critical Pragmatic Approach to Irony,' in *Conference on John Perry's Work, XVIII Inter-University Workshop on Philosophy and Cognitive Science* (Madrid, 2008).

In his discussion of what enables irony to be recognised as such, however, Grice notes some important specifications. First, a mere violation of the maxim of quality may not necessarily make an utterance ironic. Consider how the following example is merely bizarre:

(19)   A and B are walking down the street, and they both see a car with a shattered window. B says, *Look, that car has all its windows intact*. A is baffled. B says, You didn't catch on; I was in an ironical way drawing your attention to the broken window.[93]

Second, ironic utterances are not marked as such, not even an ironic tone of voice is a defining character of irony. Grice refers to the fact that a metaphor can be prefaced by expressions such as "metaphorically speaking," whereas irony cannot take such prefaces as "to speak ironically."[94] This is because, according to him, "to be ironical is, among other things, to pretend (as the etymology suggests), and while one wants the pretence to be recognised as such to announce it as a pretence would spoil the effect."[95]

According to Grice, what makes an utterance ironic, besides the violation of the maxim of truthfulness, is that it conveys a "hostile or derogatory judgment or a feeling such as indignation or contempt." Verbal irony is distinguished from the rest of utterances that violate the maxim of truthfulness such as metaphor by the critical nature of the attitude it communicates. Grice considers utterances that violate the maxim of truthfulness to communicate favourable attitudes towards their targets to be playful but not ironical.[96]

However, many would disagree that verbal irony is always critical, though usually it is so. Verbal irony may also be favourable towards its target and its so called praise-by-blame sub-type is well acknowledged since antiquity.[97] This stance is reaffirmed more recently in the framework of RT as the less frequent type of praise-by-blame is convincingly explained along with the usual blame-by-praise type as well as other

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[93] Grice, Studies in the Way of Words,' 53.
[94] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 54.
[95] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 54.
[96] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 54.
[97] Moneva, 'Towards a Historical Synthesis of the Concept of Irony,' 103.

features of verbal irony. In the next section, RT's account of verbal irony will be discussed in some detail.

2.2.   Verbal Irony as Echoic Metarepresentation

The longstanding perception of verbal irony as a figure of speech meaning usually the opposite of what is said has gone through profound challenges in the past few decades. In particular, Sperber and Wilson, in their article, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction' usher in a significant break with the Classical and Gricean approaches. In this work, Sperber and Wilson propose that irony can be explained as an echoic mention, as opposed to use of a proposition.[98] The use-mention distinction concerns the employment of expressions to make a reference: "use" refers to the employment of an expression to refer to some event or situation; mention refers to an employment of an expression to refer to the expression itself.[99]

Example: In (20) reference is made to the status of examples but in (21) and (22), the reference is made to the expression "marginal".

(20)   These examples are rare and marginal
(21)   "Marginal" is a technical term.
(22)   Who had the nerve to call my examples marginal?[100]

According to this proposal, irony is a case of echoic mention (for the RT notion of echo, see II.1.3.4 above).

> What we are claiming is that all standard cases of irony, and many that are nonstandard from the traditional point of view, involve (generally implicit) mention of a proposition. These cases of mention are interpreted as echoing a remark or opinion that the speaker wants to characterise as ludicrously inappropriate or irrelevant.[101]

The speaker in (23) is predicting whereas the one in (24) is ironic about the prediction after it failed to materialise.[102]

(23)   The weather is going to be lovely (prior to decision to walk)
(24)   What lovely weather (when it starts to rain)

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[98] D. Sperber and D. Wilson, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction,' in P. Cole (ed.) *Radical Pragmatics* (Academic Press, 1981) 295-318, reprinted in S. Davis (ed.), *Pragmatics: A Reader* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991) 550-64.
[99] Ibid., 554-5.
[100] Ibid., 555.
[101] Ibid., 559.
[102] Ibid., 553, 558.

Various experiments were conducted in which the notion of echo as explanation for irony was upheld.[103] However, the notion of mention proved restrictive as it entails linguistic reproduction and thus excludes non-linguistic resemblance. Thus the echoic mention theory of irony was slightly revised in subsequent works.[104] In these later works, Wilson and Sperber drop "mention" in favour of "interpretive resemblance" and "echoic-mention" in favour of "echoic interpretation". They thus define verbal irony as a variety of echoic interpretation (II.1.3.4).[105]

2.2.1. Verbal Irony is Attributive/Echoic

As discussed earlier in the chapter (1.3.4), echoic utterances are attributive utterances intended to communicate speaker's attitudes towards the original thought or utterances. Sperber and Wilson argue that ironical utterances are cases of echoic use of language: the speaker of an ironic utterance attributes her utterance to someone else in order to express her attitude to it.

> [When utterances] achieve relevance by informing the hearer of the fact that the speaker has in mind what so-and-so said, and has a certain attitude to it: the speaker's interpretation of so-and-so's thought is relevant in itself. When interpretations achieve relevance in this way, we will say that they are echoic, and we will argue that ironical utterances are cases of echoic interpretation.[106]

The feature of echo is essential to verbal irony as there can be no irony without it.[107] Consider the following examples:

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[103] J. Jorgensen, G. A. Miller and D. Sperber, 'Test of the Mention Theory of Irony,' *JEP: General* 113, 1 (1984) 112-120; Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 132-4. D. Wilson, 'Irony and Metarepresentation,' *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* 21, (2009) 183-226.

[104] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 237-43. D. Wilson and D. Sperber, 'On Verbal Irony,' *Lingua* 87, 1-2, (1992) 53-76. Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony, 123-45.

[105] Wilson and Sperber, 'On Verbal Irony,' 64. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 237-40. Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 2012, 128-34.

[106] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 238.

[107] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 135-6. Clark and Gerrig argue that pretence, not echo, essential to understanding verbal irony: H. H. Clark and R. J. Gerrig, 'On the Pretense Theory of Irony,' *JEP: General*, 113 (1984) 121–126, reprinted in R. W. Gibbs, and H. L. Colston (eds.), *Irony in Language and Thought: A Cognitive Science Reader* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007) 25-33, citing 25. See also D. Sperber, 'Verbal Irony: Pretense or Echoic Mention?' *JEP: General* 113, 1 (1984) 130-136. Other critics of the notion of echo include: S. Kumon-Nakamura, et al, 'How About Another Piece of Pie,' 57-95; K. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990) 222-3 as cited in Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 137; F. Recanati, , 'Indexicality, Context and Pretense: A Speech Act Theoretic Account,' N. Burton-Roberts (ed.), *Advances in Pragmatics* (London, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007) 213-29, citing 223-7, as cited in Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 137; G. Currie, 'Why Irony Is

(25)   A and B are walking down the street and they both see a car with a shattered window. B says, *Look, that car has all its windows intact*. A is baffled. B says, You didn't catch on; I was in an ironical way drawing your attention to the broken window.[108]

(26)   Trust the weather bureau! See what lovely weather it is: rain, rain, rain.[109]

Wilson and Sperber note that whereas (26) is a successful case of irony this is not the case with (25) though both involve pretending. Grice, who cites (25) as a counterexample to his characterization of irony in terms of pretense ("as if to say"), suggests that such examples can be excluded by further constraining irony as involving a hostile or derogatory attitude (see 2.1 above). However, ironic attitude is not just hostile or derogatory. Moreover, there's no reason why someone who would entertain B's first utterance in (25) is less worthy of ironic criticism than one who would (26). According to Wilson and Sperber, what is lacking in B's utterance in (25) is not pretense or a critical attitude but some thought or words to echo.

An ironic utterance is recognised as echoing another thought or utterance on the basis of its resemblance to its original counterpart. Resemblance between the utterances is a matter of degree ranging from having complete identity in logical form (verbatim) to sharing just some of their logical or contextual implications (meaning) sufficient to warrant that they are indeed related. The more formal or semantic properties shared the

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Pretence,' In S. Nichols (ed.) *The Architecture of the Imagination*: *New Essays on Pretence, Possibility and Fiction* (England, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 111-33, citing 116, 118 as cited in Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 138. R. J. Kreuz and S. Glucksberg, 'How to Be Sarcastic: The Echoic Reminder Theory of Verbal Irony,' *JEP: General* 118, 4 (1989) 374-86, citing 374f; H. Hamamoto, 'Irony from a Cognitive Perspective,' in R. Carston and S. Uchida (eds.), *Relevance Theory: Applications and Implications* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998) 257-70, citing 260-4; K.-I. Seto, 'On Non-Echoic Irony,' in R. Carston and S. Uchida (eds.), *Relevance Theory: Applications and Implications* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998) 239-255, citing 239; M.-A. Yamanashi, 'Some Issues in the Treatment of Irony and Related Tropes,' in R. Carston and S. Uchida (eds.), *Relevance Theory: Applications and Implications* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998) 271-81, citing 278. For Sperber and Wilson's response to some of these criticism, see D. Sperber and D. Wilson, 'Irony and Relevance: A Reply to Seto, Hamamoto and Hamanashi,' in R. Carston and S. Uchida (eds.) *Relevance Theory: Applications and Implications* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998) 283-93; D. Wilson, 'The Pragmatics of Verbal Irony: Echo or Pretence?' *Lingua* 116 (2006) 1722-43. For a survey of recent theories of verbal irony including the abovementioned accounts, see S. Attardo, 'Irony as Relevant Inappropriateness,' *JP* 32 (2000) 793-826. Attardo himself argues that verbal irony is "both inappropriate and relevant to its context." There is an attempt to extend RT notions of irony to other forms of irony (non-verbal): M. A. Ruiz-Moneva, 'Some Proposals to Cope with Forms of Irony Typically Found in Literary Texts from a Relevance-Theoretical Perspective,' *SLL*, 2, 2 (2011) 127-156.
[108] Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, 53.
[109] Jorgensen, Miller and Sperber, 'Test of the Mention Theory of Irony,' 114.

more resemblance there is and the more salient the relationship will be. The audience recovers the intended resemblance guided by the principle of relevance.[110]

An ironic utterance may echo a precisely attributable utterance, such as a preceding utterance in a discourse.[111] Contrastively, an ironic utterance may be an echo of an unspecified thought such as a traditional wisdom or a cultural norm.[112] According to Sperber and Wilson, the difference between standard and nonstandard examples of irony can be explained in terms of the fact that there are such a wide range of sources of echo.

> Some are immediate echoes, and others delayed; some have their source in actual utterances, others in thoughts or opinions; some have a real source, others an imagined one; some are traceable back to a particular individual, whereas others have a vaguer origin. When the echoic character of the utterance is not immediately obvious, it is nevertheless suggested.[113]

Utterances (27a-c) can be taken as an echo of either what someone just said or a general belief.

(27)   In the middle of heavy rain[114]
        a. It seems to be raining
        b. I'm glad we didn't bother to bring an umbrella
        c. Did you remember to water the flowers?

The speaker of an ironic utterance tacitly attributes the utterance to someone else. In other words, ironic utterances are not marked as attributed. The audience has to infer that it is attributed to some source. This has implications for recognizing the source of echo. The most salient are cases where ironic utterances echo a specific utterance in an immediate context. On the other end utterances may be ambiguous as to their ironic status.[115]

2.2.2. Verbal Irony is Attitudinal

According to RT, verbal irony is intended to convey an attitude rather than a figurative meaning contrastive to the corresponding literal one. In other words, verbal irony

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[110] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 131; Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' 244.
[111] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 129.
[112] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 130; Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 238-9.
[113] Sperber and D. Wilson, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction,' 558.
[114] Ibid., 553, 558.
[115] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 129-30.

achieves relevance by communicating a speaker's attitude to the thought an utterance represents. This is what distinguishes ironical utterances from other attributed metarepresentations such as quotation whose relevance is to inform the hearer of someone else's speech or thought. As stated above, verbal irony belongs to the category of echoic use of language where relevance lies in communicating speakers' attitude to echoed representations or to those who entertain them. [116]

The attitude communicated through verbal irony is one of dissociation (rejection). The speaker of an ironic utterance dissociates from the utterance she echoes. Dissociative attitude distinguishes ironic utterances from other types of echoic utterances such as approvals or expressions of doubts. Dissociative attitudes "vary quite widely, falling anywhere on a spectrum from amused tolerance through various shades of resignation or disappointment to contempt, disgust, outrage or scorn." [117]

Whereas attitude may or may not be marked in other echoic utterances, in irony it is always tacit. Ironic attitudes are to be inferred pragmatically from the context (and, possibly, gesture in verbal dialogue). [118]

Ironic attitudes can be expressed to specific utterances or thoughts attributed to specific individuals. It may also target more general phenomena such as values attributable to people in general. [119] Moreover, it is possible that the ironic utterance may express attitude to the whole or just part of the original thought it echoes. [120]

(28)   I left my bag in the restaurant and someone kindly walked off with it. [121]

(29)   As an elderly disabled pensioner, I sit here wrapped in a duvet, knowing that (the premier) took twenty percent from my winter heating allowance to add to his foreign aid programme is comforting. I felt some degree of happiness to see that I had in some way contributed to the Indian Mars project. If I am still here at the next election, I will be voting UKIP. [122]

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[116] Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 238.

[117] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 130; Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 239-40.

[118] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 129; Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 239.

[119] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 130. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 239.

[120] Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 132.

[121] Ibid., 123.

[122] L. Brown, 'How You Pay £4m to Fund the Ethiopian Spice Girls: New Aid Storm over Project that's even Ridiculed in African country,' *Mail Online*, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2508063/UK-

The speaker dissociates only from the word "kindly" in (28) and from expressions "comforting" and "some degree of happiness" in (29). The speaker asserts the rest of the paragraph.

The RT characterization of verbal irony can be summed up as follows:
Verbal irony can be defined as a representation of a thought or utterance attributed to someone other than the speaker (or the speaker's own previous thought or utterance) and used echoically to communicate a dissociative attitude to the echoed representation.

The interpretation of verbal irony involves the identification of the nature and source of the representation (attribution), the relevance of the representation (echoic) and the kind of attitude communicated. In Sperber and Wilson's words, it "depends, first, on recognition of the utterance as echoic; second, on an identification of the source of the opinion echoed; and third, on recognition that the speaker's attitude to the opinion echoed is one of rejection or dissociation."[123]

Other Features of Verbal Irony
Sperber and Wilson argue that their approach, the echoic mention account, explains various aspects of verbal irony far better than the traditional and the Gricean approaches do and continue to maintain this with regard to the later version of the theory, the echoic account. The properties of verbal irony that Sperber and Wilson believe to better account for include the following.[124]

1. Ironic victim: irony is critical of its target while this is not the case in figurative expressions such as metaphor with which traditional and Gricean approaches categorise irony. According to the traditional and Gricean views, the audience of an ironic

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pay-4m-fund-Ethiopian-Spice-Girls-New-aid-project-Yegna-ridiculed.html#ixzz2knooRm4J, accessed November 16, 2013, 10:24:29 AM.
[123] Sperber and Wilson, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction,' 558. D. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 237-40. For more on comprehension of verbal irony see F. Y. Ramos, 'Irony: Context Accessibility and Processing Effort,' *Pragmalingüística* 5-6, (1998) 391-411; F. Y. Ramos, 'Literal/Non-literal and the Processing of Verbal Irony.' *Pragmalingüística* 8-9 (2000b) 349-78; F. Y. Ramos, 'On Reaching the Intended Ironic Interpretation,' *IJC* 10, 1-2, (2000a) 27-78; Z. Livnat, 'On Verbal Irony and Types of Echoing,' *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* 15 (2003) 71-81.
[124] Sperber and Wilson, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction,' 559-61; H.L. Colston, 'On Necessary Conditions for Verbal Irony Comprehension,' *PC* 8, 2 (2000a) 277-324.

comment can be the victim of irony. According to Sperber and Wilson's echoic account, the attitude communicated by irony is aimed at the thoughts or utterances entertained by someone. The victim of irony is, therefore, the person whose thought or utterance is being echoed, not the audience.[125]

2. Ironic asymmetry or normative bias: Differently from figurative expressions, irony usually involves blame by praise, i.e. affirmative linguistic form is used to communicate a negative message, as "how smart!" to imply "how stupid." The reverse, "how stupid" to imply "how smart," i.e., praise by blame is not so usual. This is so because societal norms are such that things should be good.[126]

3. Ironic tone of voice: tone of voice is peculiar to ironic utterances (spoken). There is no tone of voice as regards any figurative language posing a challenge for traditional and Gricean views. The echoic view of irony explains ironic tone of voice as a natural companion of the attitude expressed by the ironical utterance: "It is merely one of the variety of tones (doubtful, approving, contemptuous, and so on) that the speaker may use to indicate his attitude to the utterance or opinion mentioned."[127]

2.3. Summary

In this section, I have discussed RT's echoic account of verbal irony following an overview of the traditional definition and Grice's approach. According to Sperber and Wilson, verbal irony is echoic, that is, the communicator attributes the utterance to someone else and tacitly dissociates from it. The communicator communicates her attitude to the attributed utterance. She may express her attitude to either an immediate specific utterance or a distant, general thought such as social norms. Attitude may be expressed towards the whole of the utterance or to some aspects of it. The speaker's ironic utterance resembles the original in some formal or meaning properties. Interpreting verbal irony requires recognition of the echoic nature of the utterance and the specific attitude it is intended to communicate.

RT's echoic account of verbal irony also explains features of irony that have long been recognised but not well accounted for. These are the ironic victim, the normative bias

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[125] Sperber and Wilson, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction,' 560-1.
[126] Ibid., 559; Wilson and Sperber, 'Explaining Irony,' 142.
[127] Sperber and Wilson, 'Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction,' 559.

and the ironic tone of voice. Since verbal irony is echoic, the victim is the person whose utterance or thought is being echoed; ironic asymmetry is the result of echoed expectations which are usually positive; the ironic tone of voice naturally follows the type of dissociative attitude being communicated.

The present thesis will seek to apply the echoic theory of irony to passages in Malachi.

In the next section (3), the RT account of metalinguistic negation will be explored followed by that of echo question in the following section (4).

3. The Echoic Account of Metalinguistic Negation/Denial

There is consensus among scholars that denial is communicated by means of negation.[128] In fact, denial, also known as metalinguistic negation, is usually defined in terms of the negation operator, such as the English 'not'. The concern lies with distinguishing denial from ordinary negation and various theories have been put forward to this end. The most notable views are:

1) Horn's pragmatic approach
2) Burton-Robert's semantic-pragmatic analysis and
3) Carston's echoic characterization

3.1. Horn's Pragmatic Characterization of Metalinguistic Negation

Horn explains the phenomenon of metalinguistic negation (denial) in terms of the nature of both the negation operator and negated material. He recognises that there is a single negation operator functioning in two distinct ways: descriptive and metalinguistic. Metalinguistic negation is a marked (specialised) use of the descriptive, ordinary function of the operator.[129]

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[128] However, this is disputed by van der Sandt and E. Maier who argue that "depending on the polarity of the utterance objected to, a denial may also be a positive statement as in the following example where b is a response to a: a. Herb is not tolerant. b. Herb is tolerant. R. van der Sandt, and E. Maier, 'Denials in Discourse,' *Michigan Linguistics and Philosophy Workshop (University of Nijmegen,* 2003) 3.

[129] L. R. Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' *LSA*, 61, 1 (1985) 121-174 citing 121-2.

Horn sees distinction between metalinguistic negation and ordinary negation as a matter of "pragmatic ambiguity - a built-in duality of use" of the negation operator. [130]

> What I am claiming for negation, then, is a use distinction: it can be a descriptive truth-functional operator, taking a proposition *p* into a proposition *not-p,* or a metalinguistic operator which can be glossed 'I object to *u*', where *u* is crucially a linguistic utterance rather than an abstract proposition. [131]

Horn also discusses metalinguistic negation in terms of what the operator is used to negate. He maintains that, unlike descriptive negation, which is used to deny the truthfulness of a proposition, metalinguistic negation is used to negate assertability of an utterance (expression) as in (30) and (31).

(30)   John didn't manage to solve SOME of the problems; he managed to solve ALL of them. [132]

(31)   I'm not his daughter; he's my father.

Accordingly, metalinguistic negation is non-truth-conditional, i.e., neither true nor false. [133] Which of the two types of negation is intended is to be inferred pragmatically: "it is up to the addressee to determine just what the speaker intended to object to or deny in the use of a negative form at a given point in the conversation." [134]

While, as Horn claims, the phenomenon of metalinguistic negation involves objection to non-truth conditional features of utterances, it is, nevertheless, broader than this. Moreover, there is no need for positing any ambiguity as regards the negation operator. These issues will be treated in detail in II.3.3.

3.2.   Burton-Roberts' Semantic-Pragmatic Approach (Semantic Presuppositionalism)

Burton-Roberts maintain that Horn's non-truth conditional metalinguistic negation is a subset of a broader phenomenon. According to him, metalinguistic negation can be

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[130] Ibid., 122. Horn rejects semantic ambiguists who propose multiple negation operators, each operating on proposition and metalinguistically, for instance, B. Russell, 'On denoting,' *Mind* 14 (1905) 479-93 as cited in Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 121. He also rejects those who hold that there is only a single negation operating on propositions, for instance, R. M. Kempson, *Negation, Ambiguity, and the Semantics-pragmatics Distinction*, Paper presented at LSA Annual Meeting, San Diego, 1982 as cited in Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 121.
[131] Ibid., 136.
[132] Ibid., 132.
[133] Ibid., 122, 137-8.
[134] Ibid., 137.

truth-conditional as well. Burton-Roberts points out that the so-called presupposition denial such as (32) and (33) are instances of metalinguistic negation.[135]

(32)   The king of France is not bald; there is no king of France. [136]
(33)   I haven't stopped smoking; I've never smoked in my life!

Burton-Roberts maintains that metalinguistic negations, including Horn's examples (30) and (31) and his own presupposition denials (32) and (33) are semantic or truth-conditional contradictions. This feature is crucial not only because it is more inclusive but also because, he maintains, it is the basis for pragmatic reanalysis of negation metalinguistically. Put differently, the need to resolve such semantic / truth-conditional / literal contradictions motivates pragmatic reanalysis. [137]

Burton-Roberts' semantic-contradiction thesis comprises three components: a negative clause, a follow-up (correction) clause and a previous utterance (a positive counterpart of the negative clause). A pragmatic reanalysis of metalinguistic negation is necessitated by the contradiction induced by the follow-up/correction clause. The reanalysis involves a search for a previous utterance to which the negation is construed as a rejoinder. As such, metalinguistic negation operates over "a quotational allusion to the previous use," or simply, "a mention of the positive proposition."[138]

Thus in (32) above, the negative clause, "The king of France is not bald" is followed by "there is no king of France" and one can think of a previous utterance, "The king of France is bald" to which the negation is a rejoinder. The search for the utterance to which the negation is a rejoinder enables a reanalysis of metalinguistic negation, not as semantic denial but as a mention of a previous utterance. In other words, at reanalysis, the negation operates on a different level, i.e., on a mentioned, not used, utterance. As

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[135] N. Burton-Roberts, 'On Horn's Dilemma: Presupposition and Negation,' *JL*, 25, 1 (1989) 95-125, citing 95, 122-4 (see 119-24 for more explanation). Horn argues that presupposition cancelling negations are part of a wider phenomenon of metalinguistic negation: Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 122. Burton-Roberts seems to agree with Horn in this regard as he endorses Horn's treatment of metalinguistic negation albeit his disagreement regarding Horn's generalization of MN in terms of truth-conditionality (cf. Burton-Roberts, 'On Horn's Dilemma,' 95, 122). The fact that Burton Roberts focuses on presupposition cancelling negations in his discussion of metalinguistic negation has to do with his goal of seeking support for semantic presuppositionalism (Burton-Roberts, 'On Horn's Dilemma,' 95).
[136] Burton-Roberts, 'On Horn's Dilemma,' 98.
[137] Ibid., 115, 122
[138] Ibid., 118

such, the speaker of the utterance is understood on second analysis as responding to the form of utterance, not its proposition.[139]

To sum up thus far, in explainig metalinguistic negation (denial), Horn takes into account the nature of the negation operator.[140] Both Horn and Burton-Roberts maintain that the material falling under the scope of the negation operator (what is negated) is a non-truth-conditional property of a previous utterance. According to Horn, metalinguistic negation can be about any property of an utterance but not its proposition.[141] For Burton-Roberts, metalinguistic negation is truth-conditionally contradictory with the follow-up clause, and has to be reinterpreted as non-truth-conditional.[142]

Both Horn and Burton-Roberts seem to focus on conversational and particularly salient cases of metalinguistic negation in which a follow-up clause instigates pragmatic reprocessing. Thus they limit the phenomenon in several important ways. These will be discussed in II.3.3.3 below along with responses from R. Carston to whose account of denial I will turn now.

3.3. Carston's RT Approach to Metalinguistic Negation
3.3.1. Points of Departure from Previous Views

Carston's approach to metalinguistic negation develops from RT.[143] Her account marks a significant departure from previous theories in at least two important ways. One of the ways in which Carston's echoic account departs from previous theories is by shifting the focus away from the nature of the operator to that of the material over which the negation operates, with the latter serving as the sole route of explanation. According to Carston, "there seems to be no need to postulate any kind of ambiguity in the negation itself; rather the two uses (descriptive and metalinguistic) fall out from our perfectly general capacity to use language either to represent states of affairs or to represent other

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[139] Ibid., 118-9
[140] Ibid., 95. The debate over negation has the thrust of a larger contention as to whether presupposition is semantically built into language or whether it is a pragmatic inference. Negation provides the line of attack for the parties locked in the debate.
[141] Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 122, 136, 137-8.
[142] Burton-Roberts, 'On Horn's Dilemma,' 115.
[143] van der Sandt and Maier, 'Denials in Discourse,' 3, follows similar path, but narrower than Carston's account as according to the former denials require a previous utterance.

representations, including other utterances." Positing ambiguity of the negation operator is not only unnecessary but also against intuition.[144]

The other difference is that Carston's echoic account cuts across the distinction previous theories make between metalinguistic negation and descriptive negation in terms of truth-conditionality of the negated material. This dichotomy seems to be a result of thinking that since descriptive negations are truth-conditional (negate the truth of a proposition), the domain of metalinguistic negations must be non-truth-conditional properties of utterances.[145] Carston argues that "finding the truth-conditional content false is certainly a ground on which one might object to someone's utterance."[146] According to Carston, it is often difficult to tell whether a speaker is intending to echo a truth-conditional content or a non-truth-conditional property as in (34) and (35) below."[147]

(34)   I didn't put him up; I put up with him.
(35)   He doesn't need FOUR MATS; he needs MORE FATS.[148]

By rejecting the nature of the negation operator and the notion of truth conditionality as parameters, Carston's approach provides a more intuitively plausible and inclusive account of denial. According to her account such characterization as a truth-conditionality requirement is the result of working with limited data. Thus Carston's echoic account takes the focus off a specialised group of instances of denial and explains more instances of the phenomenon by pointing out the only essential, but more general feature of metalinguistic negations, namely, the echoic nature of the material under the scope of the negation operator: denials may or may not be truth-conditional and they may be echoes of previous utterances or more distant thoughts such as general social expectations, hopes or aspirations. According to Carston, features such as non-truth conditionality, contradiction, the presence of correction clauses and previous utterances are optional.

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[144] Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' 309, 311. For Carston's position on the nature of the negation operator, see 326-9.
[145] Ibid., 311.
[146] Ibid., 322. See Horn's (Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use, 121) definition of metalinguistic negation operator as a "device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatever…"
[147] Ibid., 322-3.
[148] Ibid., 315.

In the next section (3.3.2), the echoic account itself will be discussed in detail. The following section (3.3.3) will deal with optional characteristics of metalinguistic negation.

3.3.2. Metalinguistic Negation as Tacit/Implicit Echoic Use

According to Carston, the defining feature of metalinguistic negation is that the material falling under the scope of the negation operator is echoic.

> The correct generalization about the metalinguistic cases is that the material in the scope of the negation operator, or some of it at least, is echoically used... A representation is used echoically when it reports what someone else has said or thought and expresses an attitude to it.[149]

Thus instances of metalinguistic negation cited by Horn (30) and (31) and Burton-Roberts (32) and (33) as well as Carston's own example (34) and (35) are all characterised by the fact that the negated material is attributed. These examples are repeated below in (36) – (41) for convenience:

(36)   John didn't manage to solve SOME of the problems; he managed to solve ALL of them.
(37)   I'm not his daughter; he's my father.
(38)   The king of France is not bald; there is no king of France.
(39)   I haven't stopped smoking; I've never smoked in my life!
(40)   I didn't put him up; I put up with him.
(41)   He doesn't need FOUR MATS; he needs MORE FATS.

Horn's criterion of non-truth conditionality does not account for examples (38) – (41) because what is negated in these examples is a truth-conditional proposition. Likewise, Burton-Roberts' semantic contradiction does not account for examples (40) and (41) because there is no such contradiction in these examples.

Echoic use of an utterance means that it is attributed to someone other than the current speaker. Thus, in metalinguistic negation, the material that comes under the scope of the negation operator is attributive, in whole or in part.[150] This can be illustrated by putting the attributed part of the sentences in (37) – (40), i.e., the material under the scope of the negation operator in quotation marks as follows in (42) – (45) below; note that in examples (36) and (41), it is already marked by capitalised letters.

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[149] Ibid., 320.
[150] Ibid., 320.

(42)   I'm not "his daughter;" he's my father.
(43)   The king of France is not "bald;" there is no king of France.
(44)   I haven't "stopped smoking;" I've never smoked in my life!
(45)   I didn't "put him up"; I put up with him.

What is negated is not the speaker's firsthand view of a situation or an event. It is not a negative description of a state of being. Rather, it is a negation of what the speaker attributes to someone else who entertained it in various forms including thoughts, assumptions, implicatures or some formal properties of utterances such as, phonology, style and pronunciation. It is, simply, a negative representation of another representation; it is a negated metarepresentation.

Echoic use of an utterance also means that the communicative relevance of such an utterance is not to convey a proposition but to express a certain attitude. In metalinguistic negation, the material falling under the scope of the negation operator is used to communicate an attitude of rejection towards the corresponding affirmative representation.[151] In (46), for instance, the form of the corresponding utterance is rejected whereas in (47) and (48) the content of the corresponding utterance and an existing thought, respectively, are denied.

(46)   I didn't manage to trap two monGEESE – I managed to trap two MONGOOSES.[152]
(47)   a. Mary seems happy these days.
       b. She isn't HAPPY; she just puts on a brave face.[153]
(48)   Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing.

The attributive nature of the material under the scope of the negation operator is implicit.[154] Unlike direct/indirect quotations and like free quotations, the attribution is not marked in any way.[155] The implicit nature of the echoic use of metalinguistic negation means that its identification is done via pragmatic inference on the basis of the resemblance between the negation and the original affirmative representation. The negated material resembles the corresponding (affirmative) representation in some shared formal or conceptual properties.[156] In each of the examples above, the material

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[151] Ibid., 320.
[152] Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 132.
[153] Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' 324.
[154] Ibid., 320-1.
[155] Ibid., 321.
[156] Ibid., 320.

under the scope of negation shares some property (phonetic, grammatical and/or semantic) with the corresponding affirmative utterance or thought.

While the attribution is implicit, attitude is explicit in that it is expressed by the negation of the corresponding representation. The attitude expressed by metalinguistic negations is that of rejection. The attitude of rejection is expressed towards the material under the scope of negation.[157]

3.3.3. Non-essential Properties of Metalinguistic Negation

As mentioned above (II.3.1, 3.2.), both Horn and Burton-Roberts explain metalinguistic negation in terms of several features. (1) It is a rejoinder (objection) to previous utterances. [158] (2) It is followed by a correction (rectification) clause. (3) It is procedurally secondary to descriptive negation, being typically understood "on a 'second pass', when the descriptive reading self-destructs."[159] A pragmatic reanalysis is necessary. (4) It objects to any non-truth-conditional property of utterances. (5) According to Burton-Roberts metalinguistic negation, taken descriptively, is contradictory with the follow-up clauses. (6) According to Horn a felicitous use of metalinguistic negation involves a rising contrastive intonation. [160]

Carston acknowledges that some examples of metalinguistic negation, such as garden-path and presupposition denials, may have all the properties mentioned above. However, she describes these cases as "an interesting subset of cases whose general form has become almost a set formula for achieving rhetorical effects." She observes that these cases are "highly effective and so memorable, but they do not form a natural class, linguistically or pragmatically."[161] Such examples are part of the more general phenomenon of metalinguistic negation. There are instances where some or most of these properties are lacking.

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[157] Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' 320.

[158] Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 135.

[159] L. R. Horn, *A Natural History of Negation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, l989/2001) 444.

[160] Horn, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity,' 134; Horn, *A Natural History of Negation*, 374.

[161] Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' 319.

Carston argues that the features by which Horn and Burton-Roberts[162] characterise metalinguistic negation are neither essential to understanding metalinguistic negation nor sufficiently general to account for all instances of the phenomenon. According to her, these features are optional.

1. Previous Utterance. According to Carston's echoic account of metalinguistic negation, a speaker's objection may not be limited to utterances. The speaker of a metalinguistic negation could echo un-articulated thoughts, assumptions, opinions or even general social norms.[163] It is inconceivable, for instance, that the negation in example (49) is a rejoinder to an utterance.

(49)   This Birthday Card is NOT from one of your admirers [on the front page of the card]
         a. It's from TWO of your admirers. [Inside the card]
         b. Happy Birthday from both of us[164]

2. Corrective Clauses and Reanalysis/Second Pass. The negation in (49) above, though ultimately corrected by what is written inside the card, is nevertheless purposely misleading.

> The idea is, of course, to deliberately mislead the receiver, who first reads the front, into taking it descriptively; then when the card is opened and the message inside is read the descriptive understanding is recognised as mistaken and there is a reanalysis in terms of the metalinguistic use…the extra processing effort required giving rise to the extra (mildly humourous) effects as Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:4.4) would predict.[165]

According to Carston, the tacit nature of attribution of the negated material provides for the rhetorical or stylistic effectiveness of the use of metalinguistic negations by enabling garden-pathing.[166]

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[162] Ibid., 309, 322-3. Carston also made a more detailed investigation of Burton-Roberts characterization in which she presented a sharp critique of his presuppositional stance and characterization of metalinguistic negation [R. Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation, "Presupposition" and the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction' *JL*, 34, 2 (1998) 309-50]. In his response to Carston, Burton-Roberts maintains that his analysis is concerned with certain instances of metalinguistic negation that he specifies as !MN. See N. Burton-Roberts, 'Presupposition-Cancellation and Metalinguistic Negation: A Reply to Carston,' *JL*, 35, 2 (1999), 347-364, citing 359-63.

[163] Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' 322, 323.

[164] Carston quotes this example from L. R. Horn, 'The Said and the Unsaid,' *OSU Working Papers in Linguistics*, SALT II Proceedings (Ohio State University, 1992) 40.

[165] Carston, 'Metalinguistic Negation and Echoic Use,' 312.

[166] Ibid., 321.

However, according to Carston, the need for reanalysis or second pass is not always present.[167] This is true when sufficient contextual clues are given initially to guide the hearer to the nature of the negation. One of such clues is a corrective clause that precedes the negation as in the following examples.[168]

(50)   Maggie's patriotic AND quixotic; not patriotic OR quixotic.
(51)   I've SPARED you my lecture; I haven't DEPRIVED you of it.
(52)   It's downright HOT out there, it's not WARM.[169]

Examples (50) – (52) also show that the corrective clause need not follow the negative sentence; it can come before it.

The need for reanalysis is also averted in cases where the negation is marked as quotation.[170]

(53)   I'm not 'his child'; he's my father.
(54)   You didn't see two 'mongeese'; you saw two mongooses.[171]

The third scenario where reanalysis is not needed is where the context allows the identification of the negation as metalinguistic. In this case there may not be a corrective clause, contrary to Horn and Burton-Roberts. Consider a situation where "A and B have an ongoing disagreement about the correct plural of 'mongoose', A advocating 'mongeese' and B 'mongooses'"[172]

(55)   A: We saw two mongeese at the zoo. B: Now, come on, you didn't see two monGEESE.

The situation of continued argument over the correct pronunciation of the word helps A to understand that B is objecting to the pronunciation without reanalysis. There is no need for a follow-up clause either.

Finally, extra-linguistic clues such as some appropriate gesture or intonation can be used in conversation to avoid reanalysis.[173] Note that, as stated earlier, clues that offset reanalysis may be withheld to allow reanalysis for the sake of achieving certain communicative and affective goals.

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[167] Ibid., 312-5.
[168] Ibid., 312-3.
[169] Ibid., 313.
[170] Ibid., 313.
[171] Ibid., 313.
[172] Ibid., 314.
[173] Ibid., 314.

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3. Non-truth conditionality of the negated material. According to Carston, the material under the scope of the negation operator need not be non-truth conditional. It may be truth-conditional or non-truth-conditional.[174] What is echoed in a metalinguistic negation could be either a semantic or conceptual content (as in most of the examples above) or non-conceptual properties such as a grammatical or phonetic form as, for instance, in (54) and (55).[175]

4. Contradiction. Contra Burton-Roberts, Carston maintains that not all cases of metalinguistic negations are semantic contradictions.[176] There seems to be no descriptive (semantic) contradiction, for instance, between the negation and the corrective clauses in (56) and (57) below.

(56)   He didn't EAT three of the cakes; he ate FOUR.
(57)   They didn't fall in love and get married; they got married and fell in love.[177]

5. Intonation. Carston understands that Horn considers contradiction intonation contour a typical feature of metalinguistic negation. She refutes this position citing the fact that metalinguistic negations in texts may not exhibit such a feature. Citing S. Chapman, she states that such a clue could actually be withheld for the effect of garden-pathing.[178]

3.4.   Summary

In this section, I have explored the RT account of metalinguistic negation or denial following an overview of two major theories. According to Carston's RT approach, metalinguistic negation (denial) is an instance of echoic use of utterance in which, at least, part of the utterance that falls under the scope of negation is attributed, echoed and rejected. The attribution of the utterance under the scope of negation is tacit, i.e., the fact that it is attributed has to be pragmatically inferred from the contextually accessible information. The negated material resembles the original in formal or meaning properties. The type of attitude specific to denial is that of rejection. Attitude is explicitly communicated in that the echoed utterance or thought is negated.

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[174] Ibid., 322-3.
[175] Ibid., 320.
[176] Ibid., 316-9.
[177] Ibid., 315.
[178] Ibid., 310, 12; S. Chapman 'Metalinguistic Negation, Sentences and Utterances,' *NCD Working Papers in Linguistics* 1 (1993) 74-94.

Denial has several optional features such as truth-conditionality, follow-up clauses, a previous utterance and pragmatic reanalysis. What is negated need not be non-truth conditional; denial may be a rejection of the validity or truthfulness of an assumption or utterance. Denial may or may not include follow-up or corrective clauses, though it usually does. Denial may or may not be a rejoinder to a previous utterance; it can be a rejection of unexpressed thoughts. Finally, denial may or may not involve garden-pathing whereby a reanalysis of the utterance is suggested by what follows. (Garden-pathing is the case in Mal 3:6b).

In the following section, I will look at the RT account of echo questions.

4. The Relevance Theory Account of Echo Questions

A set of questions, commonly referred to as "echo questions," are posed against another representation,[179] such us a previous utterance, and occur in a declarative form. The second and third utterances in (58) – (61), are echo questions.

(58)   a. Joseph: We were all out in the field, gathering bundles of wheat. All of a sudden my bundle stood straight up and your bundles circled around it and bowed down to mine.
b. Brothers: So! You're going to rule us? You're going to boss us around? (Gen. 37:7-8 [The Message])

(59)   A: Give the key to Anne.
B: Give the key to Anne?
C: Give the what to Anne?[180]

(60)   A: How well she dealt with Tom's questions!
B: How well she dealt with Tom's questions?
C: How well she dealt with whose questions?[181]

(61)   A: No, you'd better stop drinking now.
B: Ah, I'm drunk? (Suggesting that A thinks "You're drunk.")[182]

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[179] F. Parker and J. Pickeral, 'Echo Questions in English,' *AS*, 60, 4 (1985) 337-347) refer to this phenomenon as "stimulus-response pairs." See, 337.
[180] R. Huddleston, 'The Contrast between Interrogatives and Questions,' *JL*, 30, 2 (1994) 411-39, citing 427.
[181] Ibid., 427.
[182] Examples are from: E.-J. Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' *LP*, 21, 6 (1998) 603-628, examples citing 606.

In (58), Joseph's brothers repudiate the realization (fulfillment) of the implication of Joseph's dream. Similarly, B's utterance in (61), challenges A's assumption that B is drunk. B's question in (59) and (60) can be understood as either challenging A's corresponding utterance or asking for confirmation that A actually says what B heard. C's utterance is a request for clarification/confirmation as to the thing to give (59) and the person whose questions are dealt with (60).

In this section, I will discuss the RT account of echo questions. I will start by giving a brief overview of major accounts and the RT account of interrogatives in 4.1. I will then discuss three different but related RT accounts of echo questions in 4.2. In 4.3., I will offer my own evaluation of how the RT notion of echoic use as a pragmatic phenomenon and that of echo question as a sentence type pose a challenge for the analyses. Finally, I will discuss some important features of echoic questions in 4.4 before concluding the section with a summary in 4.5.

4.1. Traditional Views

Traditional accounts of echo questions vary considerably depending on what aspects of the phenomenon they emphasise. Banfield, for instance, holds that "the echo question questions what might be more appropriately termed the style of the utterance, the actual words uttered, and not what they refer to."[183] Cruttenden sees echo questions as very much like straight requests for repeats: "What did you say?"[184] Others such as Huddleston and Radford highlight the fact that echo questions are syntactically more similar with the sentence type they echo than interrogative to cast doubt on their status as question. According to Radford, "echo questions seem to have more in common with the sentence-types they are used to echo than with the corresponding non-echo questions."[185]

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[183] A. Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 125 quoted in D. Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' *Lingua* 94 (1994) 197-211, citing, 202.

[184] A. Cruttenden, *Intonation* (England, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) as cited in Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 203.

[185] R. Huddleston, *Introduction to the Grammar of English* (England, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) cited in Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,'197; A. Radford, *Transformational Grammar* (England, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 464, quoted in Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 616.

Traditional accounts of echo questions are based on the Speech Act theory of interrogatives in general. According to Bach and Harnish, questions are "special cases of requests, special in that what is requested is that the speaker provides the hearer with certain information."[186] Thus for Cruttenden they are like interrogatives with a specific request for repetition. For Banfield echo questions are different from interrogatives in that in questioning a previous utterance, its concern is not with the content of the utterance but with its style. For Huddleston, echo questions are indirect speech acts meaning "what did you say?" but not interrogatives.[187]

However, the Speech Act definition is problematic in that not all interrogatives are requests for information. Sperber and Wilson, for instance, list many examples of interrogatives that do not seem to ask for information that is relevant to the speaker. These include rhetorical questions, exam questions and expository questions. Some of these questions do not ask for information as the speaker or writer knows what the answers are (exam and expository questions) while others are not asking for information at all (rhetorical).[188]

According to RT, interrogatives belong to the category of interpretive utterances, more specifically, non-attributive metarepresentations: "interrogative utterances…interpretively represent a thought of the speaker's, which itself interpretively represents another utterance or thought…interrogative utterances are used to represent *desirable* thought."[189]

In other words, interrogatives are representations of relevant answers. Answers may be desirable (relevant) to either the communicator (such as when information or telling is requested) or to the audience (such as in expository or rhetorical questions).[190] As a result of the use-based approach to the categorization of utterances in the form of RT's

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[186] Bach and Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*, 231-41. D. Wilson and D. Sperber, 'Mood and the Analysis of Non-declarative Sentences,' in D. Wilson and D. Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance* (UK, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 210-29, citing, 221.
[187] Huddleston, 'The Contrast between Interrogatives and Questions,' 431.
[188] Wilson and Sperber, 'Mood and the Analysis of Non-declarative Sentences,' 221-3. M. Bell, 'Questioning,' *PQ*, 25 (1975) 193-212, cited in Wilson and Sperber, 'Mood and the Analysis of Non-declarative Sentences,' 223, based on consideration of such questions, relaxes the Speech Act definition by replacing the notion of "request for information" by "request to tell." However, Sperber and Wilson maintain that to tell would still be too narrow to account for such questions as rhetorical or expository.
[189] Wilson and Sperber, 'Mood and the Analysis of Non-declarative Sentences,' 225.
[190] Ibid., 225-7.

descriptive/interpretive distinction, a new approach to the analysis of a linguistic category commonly known as "echo questions" has come to challenge the traditional view, sometimes referred to as "Standard Analyses."[191] The latter has been criticised particularly for being restrictive. It has been observed that while echo questions may indeed question the style of the utterance and may request straight repeats (what did you say), they are, nevertheless, more than just about words uttered or requests for repeats. Their concern goes beyond questioning a style of an utterance or propositions expressed by an utterance or thoughts yet to be expressed to expressing certain attitudes to the original utterance or thought.[192]

In RT, echo questions are regarded as cases of metarepresentation. In sub-section 4.2, I will discuss this notion of echo questions analyzed against the background of Sperber and Wilson's account of interrogatives.

4.2.   Echo Questions as Attributive Metarepresentation

So far, more than one account of echo question has been offered within the framework of RT: Blakemore's echoic account (1994), Noh's illocutionary act account (1998) and Iwata's intonation-attribution account (2003).[193] The various accounts seem to mark different stages in the development of the explanation of echo question in RT circle.[194] All of these accounts share the conviction that echo questions are metarepresentational. Their peculiarity lies mostly in how they explain this metarepresentational feature and what specific type of metarepresentation it is. Whereas Blakemore and Noh believe that echo questions are echoic in that they communicate the speaker's attitude, Iwata maintains that echo questions are not echoic in this sense.

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[191] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 603.
[192] Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 202-5. Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' 252; S. Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives? Another Version of a Metarepresentational Analysis,' *LP*, 26, 2 (Kluwer Academic Publishers: Netherlands, 2003) 185-254, citing 200-3. Iwata singles out Ginzburg and Sag (J. Ginzburg and I. Sag, *Interrogative Investigations: The Form, Meaning, and Use of English Interrogatives* (CSLI Publications, Stanford, 2001) from non-metarepresentational approaches. He dismisses them on such evaluations that "their analysis is limited to echo questions that repeat a previous utterance," among other things. He maintains that metarepresentational analysis is better than that of Ginzburg and Sag.
[193] Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 197-211; Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 603-28; Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 185-254.
[194] Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 189 note 6.

In the remainder of this sub-section, I will briefly discuss all the three accounts (4.2.1-4.2.3). In the next sub-section (4.3), I will call attention to problems related to the use of the term "echo" in Blakemore's and Noh's accounts. I will particularly argue that the term is ambiguously used, confusing its traditional sense as referring to sentence type and that of the RT notion as communicating attitude. I will also mention the need to approach the matter from the point of view of pragmatic use as opposed to syntactic form if the sense of RT is to be preserved, pointing out that echoic use of questions is not restricted to the so called "echo questions" but involves interrogatives as well.

4.2.1. The Echoic Account

Blakemore is the first to give an extended account of echo questions in the framework of RT. In rejection of Huddleston, Blakemore assumes that echo questions are interrogatives though not syntactically. Her understanding of echo question is thus built upon RT's characterization of interrogatives as representations of relevant answers: "If echo questions are interrogatives, then they too must be analysed as interpretations of relevant thoughts – that is, as interpretations of their answers."[195]

A relevant answer to an echo question is then to be sought respective to the latter being echoic.

> But what would be a relevant answer to an echo question?...The answer, I believe, lies in the fact that they are *echo* questions…The suggestion here is that by echoing [someone's] utterance an echo questioner is communicating the proposition that his utterance is being used as a representation of [someone's] utterance and that this proposition is being used as an interpretation of a desirable [or relevant] thought [answer].[196]

To restate Blakemore, echo questions are interrogatives as well as attributive, i.e., they have an extra level of metarepresentation. An echo question represents someone else's utterance (attributive) as well as relevant answers. It is both attributive and interrogative at the same time. Thus in examples (62) to (64) B's utterances are interrogatives and are attributed to A.

(62)   A: I've bought you an aeroplane
        B: You've bought me a WHAT?

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[195] Blakemore 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 202. Wilson and Sperber, 'Mood and the Analysis of Non-Declarative Sentences,' 225.
[196] Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 202, 205. Blakemore claims that her understanding explains why echo questions can be interrogative and yet achieve relevance differently and why echo questions retain interrogative interpretation even when they echo non-interrogatives.

(63)   A: What a fool I am?
       B: What a fool YOU are?
(64)   A: Did you get drunk?
       B: Did I get WHAT?[197]

Blakemore believes that echo questions are echoic because they can be used to communicate attitudes. Thus, all B's utterances in (62)-(64) can be considered echoic. Yet, she also believes that they can be used for other communicative goals such as requests for repetitions. Utterances in (62) and (64) can be seen as requests for repetition.

4.2.2. The Illocutionary Force Account

Blakemore's analysis of echo questions has been questioned on several fronts by Noh. Yet, most of Noh's critiques are more of a refinement than significant alteration of the basic idea of the metarepresentational nature of echo questions that Blakemore maintains. One important observation is that Blakemore's definition is not clear. In fact, it does not reflect her (Blakemore's) central claim that echo questions are echoic, i.e., they communicate attitude. [198]

While, like Blakemore, Noh maintains that echo questions are interrogatives, she argues instead that they "communicate higher-level explicatures appropriate to interrogative utterances, determined by wh-words or rising intonation. [199] Higher level explicature, as discussed earlier in this chapter (1.3.3) are "saying that", "asking that" "telling that" etc. The corresponding higher level explicature appropriate to interrogatives is, then, "are you saying/asking/telling that" respectively. Thus, for instance, in questioning a thought or an utterance, an echo-questioner asks whether someone is saying/asking/telling that p (where p is the propositional form of the echoed thought/utterance). In questioning a previous question, an echo questioner asks whether someone asked that p. The higher

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[197] Ibid., 198.
[198] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 619-20. Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 205.
[199] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 620. Noh maintains that the higher level explicature saying, asking, telling are attributed speech acts (illocutionary acts). Thus, Noh's analysis is referred to as "illocutionary-force analysis"; for instance Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 191.

level explicatures "said that p," "asked that p" etc. are, then, what an echo question asks. The following examples are taken from Noh.[200]

(65)   A. I'm leaving on Tuesday.
         B1. You're leaving on Tuesday?
         B2. You're leaving when?
(66)   A. Talk to a fortune-teller.
         B1. Talk to a fortune-teller?
         B2. Talk to what/who?

Echo questions B1 and B2 in examples above can be paraphrased as in (67) and (68) below.

(67)   B1'. Are you saying that you're leaving on Tuesday?
         B2' When are you saying that you're leaving?
(68)   B1'. Are you telling me to talk to a fortune-teller?
         B2'. What/Who are you telling me to talk to?

Noh maintains that echo questions are attributive: they involve attribution of a thought or utterance to someone other than the speaker. Like Blakemore, she maintains that echo questions are echoic in the RT sense of the word, while also acknowledging that they can be used to request information.[201] As discussed above under (II.1.3.4) echoic utterances are those utterances that are used to express the communicator's attitude to the original thought or utterance. It is not clear how echo questions can be generalised as echoic while also serving non echoic roles.

4.2.3. The Attributive Account

A third account of echo Questions is offered by Iwata who seeks to improve Blakemore's and Noh's analyses by claiming that "while the basic idea of metarepresentational analysis seems correct, it is better implemented differently."[202] According to Iwata, Noh's analysis, though better than Blakemore's account, does not include all cases of echo questions.[203]

In his own analysis, Iwata identifies three features that he believes to characterise echo questions: intonation, attribution and focused metarepresentation. [204] Thus he makes a

[200] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 621.
[201] Ibid., 604, 606-7, 625-6.
[202] Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 185.
[203] Ibid., 199-202.
[204] Ibid., 247.

three-fold claim. First, the question status of echo question is indicated by a rising intonation. So, intonation is a necessary feature of echo questions.[205] Iwata's insistence on intonation as a defining characteristics of echo question does not account for the fact that echo questions, like any other type of utterances, are used in written texts. Intonation is usually not indicated in such texts and thus must be inferred pragmatically.[206]

Second, Iwata maintains that an echo questioner asks an attributed utterance or thought.[207] The echo-questioner uses someone else's utterance or thought to pose a question about some aspect of the original, as in the following examples.

(69)   A: Did you call the POLice?
         B: POLice? No, I didn't. I called the poLICE.
(70)   A: He is a gentleman.
         B: He is a gentleman?
(71)   I ask whether you said "POLice".
(72)   I ask whether you said "he is a gentleman."

In (69) and (70), B attributes the word "POLice" and the clause "he is a gentleman" to A.[208] The questions B asks in (69) and (70) can be rephrased as in (71) and (72) respectively.

The claim that echo questions are attributive is similarly made by both Blakemore and Noh though Iwata is more explicit about it. However, unlike Blakemore and Noh, Iwata does not believe that echo questions are necessarily echoic.[209] Iwata's observation that echo questions are not necessarily echoic reveals the problem posed by the term "echo". This will be discussed further in 4.3 below.

Third, the "portion of an EQ [echo question] that has given rise to the uncertainty is contrastively stressed." Iwata maintains that this is the most relevant part of the echo question and serves the procedural purpose of guiding the hearer's attention. [210]

(73)   A: I've bought you an aeroplane.
         B: You've bought me an AEROPLANE?

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[205] Ibid., 204.
[206] See also Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 198, note 1.
[207] Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 206.
[208] Ibid., 207-8.
[209] Ibid., 188-9.
[210] Ibid., 210, 211

The stressed portion of B's echo question in (73) is indicated by capitalised fonts. Again, the claim regarding the focalised part of echo question is not unique to Iwata but he makes this feature part of his definition.

4.3. "Echo Questions" or Echoically Used Questions?

Blakemore and Noh maintain that echo questions are echoic in an RT sense but Iwata does not. He does not think that such a claim is factually correct because echo questions are not necessarily echoic (not all echo questions are echoic).[211] Iwata seems justified in this since both Blakemore and Noh contradict themselves as they make this claim while also acknowledging the reality of instances of non-echoic use. For instance, Blakemore acknowledges claims by non-RT accounts (such as Banfield and Cruttenden) that echo questions serve as requests of confirmation of words uttered or propositions expressed. So does Noh.[212]

The fact that both Blakemore and Noh acknowledge that echo questions may communicate more than attitudes and yet maintain that they are echoic in RT sense shows that they are dealing with two different concerns under the term "echo": a sentence type that poses questions about someone else's utterance or thought (echo question in traditional and Iwata's sense) and the use of such sentence type to communicate attitude (echo questions in RT sense). Their claim can be restated as follows: echo questions are a class of sentence type specialised in communicating attitude. This is obviously not the case. The problem is that the notion of echo in the sense of RT is used to make generalizations about these two disparate phenomena associated with an ambiguous use of the term "echo". I will try to clarify this and make some observations relevant to this thesis.

First, echo questions as a class of sentence type is a language specific syntactic/semantic concern. There is a significant effort in RT circles to explain echo questions in this sense in terms of their relationship to interrogatives. As discussed above, Blakemore

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[211] Ibid., 188-9.
[212] Blakemore 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 205; Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*, 125; Cruttenden, *Intonation* as cited in Blakemore 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 203; Noh 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,'610.

defines echo questions as interrogatives with an extra layer of metarepresentation (II.4.2.1). Her position is shared by Noh and Iwata who refine the thesis by specifying that echo questions are semantically/pragmatically interrogatives but syntactically different.[213] The difference, according to both Noh and Iwata, is that unlike interrogatives which are marked by fronting of wh-phrase (in wh-questions) and subject-auxiliary inversion (yes/no questions), the status of echo questions as question is marked by intonation only. Whereas Wilson and Noh think that echo questions are declarative in form, Iwata concurs with the traditional view that echo questions have no syntactic form of their own (they take that of the sentence type they respond to.[214]

However, while the attempt to explain echo questions as sentence type in relation to interrogatives may be appropriate with regard to the English language, in other languages the explanation along this line may not be relevant at all. The reason is that in these languages, there are simply no such separate categories. For instance, in some Ethiopian languages, such as Amharic, there is neither movement of question word nor use of auxiliary and thus there is no change in word order. Distinguishing between echo questions and interrogatives, it seems, is a matter of pragmatic inference, i.e., relevance guided interpretation. So, the difference between echo question and other questions cannot be generalised in terms of syntactic properties and should be seen as a pragmatic one. In other words, one cannot always tell whether or not a question is an echo question from its syntactic form.[215]

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[213] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 604; see also p. 616, 620-4. Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 248. According to Iwata, echo question, unlike interrogatives, are "non-syntactically licensed" and thus "do not show Wh-fronting or inversion. Iwata assigns the absence of wh-fronting and auxiliary-subject inversion as well as non-licensing of NPI's to absence of distinct syntactic behaviour in echo questions. He also lists other ways echo questions differ from interrogatives, differences that he attributes to the doubly metarepresentational (question + attribution) nature of echo questions (see 213-27). Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 622) attributes echo questions' syntactic difference from interrogatives to its metarepresentational nature.

[214] Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' 252. Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 606-7, 618. Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 199, 204-5. See also E. Vidal, 'Echo-syntax and Metarepresentations,' *Lingua*, 112 (2002) 871-900 (especially 871-2), who claims that, besides pragmatic inference from speech situation, echo questions can also be identified via their formal properties.

[215] See R. Artstein, 'A Focus Semantics for Echo Questions,' in A´. Bende-Farkas and A. Riester (eds.) *Workshop on Information Structure in Context* (IMS, University of Stuttgart, 2002) 98–107, citing 101-3. Artstein recognizes that syntactic properties such as movement of question word are neither cross linguistic nor essential to defining echo questions.

Second, echo question in RT sense is part of a cross-linguistic pragmatic category, an interpretive/attributive use of utterance to communicate questioning attitudes. This is actually how Wilson defines it even though she does not seem to distinguish between the two senses of the term.[216] Questions may take any language specific syntactic form, such as interrogative (fronting, inversion) or declarative in English (standard echo questions), and still be used to communicate attitude. There seems to be no formal category that is by default echoic. In other words, what makes a question echoic is not its form or something else but the fact that they are *used* to express attitude. This is in agreement with Wilson and Sperber's assertion:

> More seriously, what we see as the fundamental distinction between interpretive and descriptive use cross-cuts any distinction among sentence types, and hence any distinction among semantic moods…every utterance – whatever its syntactic or semantic type – is in the first instance a more or less literal interpretation of a thought of the speaker's. This fact is not linguistically encoded in any way… Similarly, any utterance, of any syntactic or semantic type, can be used as a second-order interpretation, and the fact is not normally linguistically encoded.[217]

So, if "echo" in echo question has the sense of RT notion of echoic use, the issue is not whether echo questions are interrogatives but rather whether interrogatives can communicate attitude, whether they can be used echoically; and as Sperber and Wilson assert, indeed they can, and when they do, they are echoic.

> Interrogatives…do encode the fact that they are second-order interpretations of a certain type. But this does not prevent them from being used echoically too. Consider (20):
> (20) John sighed. Would she never speak?
> The question in (20) is a case of free indirect speech. As such it is triply interpretive: it is… [an] interpretation of a thought of the speaker's or writer's, which is itself an echoic interpretation of a thought attributed to John, which is in turn an interpretation of a desirable thought, namely, the answer to the question.[218]

In this thesis the term "echo" is used in the sense it has in RT, i.e., using an attributed thought or utterance to communicate certain attitudes. It will be used in the same sense in the phrase "echo question" irrespective of the sentence type (syntactic nature) of the question in view. In the following section, I will briefly discuss features of echo questions including the range of attitude they communicate.

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[216] Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' 252, 253.
[217] Wilson and Sperber, 'Mood and the Analysis of Non-declarative Sentences,' 228.
[218] Ibid., 228-9.

4.4.   Features of Echoically Used Questions

4.4.1. Range of Attitude Communicated

It has been shown above that questions can be used echoically, i.e., communicators may employ questions to express attitudes towards, at least some aspects of a thought or an utterance. The type of attitude communicated is that of questioning. This may include teasing, puzzlement, incredulity or disagreement of any sort.

(74)   A: You finally managed to solve the problems.
         B: Managed? I solved them in two minutes.[219]
(75)   A. Peter: I need a holiday
         B. Mary: You need a holiday? What about me?[220]

In (74) B believes that A's assessment of her ability to solve the question was wrong. In (75), Mary challenges Peter's suggestion on the ground that it ignores her needs.

4.4.2. Targets of Echo Question

Earlier analyses claim that echo questions are essentially repetitions of a prior utterance. According to Banfield, for instance, echo questions "are distinguished from other questions by their (restricted) context. An echo question occurs in dialogue as a reaction to a prior utterance and is interpretable only with respect to it...Other questions may be the first or the only utterance in a discourse."[221]

Noh, on the other hand, argues that echo questions do not require a previous utterance: as well as utterances, echo questions may echo unexpressed thoughts. She maintains that positing a previous utterance as a requirement excludes clear cases of echo questions without a previous utterance such as B's in (76)-(78).[222]

(76)   A: Yesterday I met the doctor I told you about.
         B: So he gave you the treatment?

[219] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 611.
[220] Wilson, 'Metarepresentation in Linguistic Communication,' 252.
[221] Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*, 124, quoted in Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 605. Cruttenden, *Intonation* as cited in Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 203 maintains that echo questions are very similar to straight requests for repeats: 'What did you say?' See also R. Huddleston, *English Grammar: An Outline* (England, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 140; Huddleston, 'The Contrast between Interrogatives and Questions,' 428-434; Radford, *Transformational Grammar*, 463; Horn, *A Natural History of Negation*, 381.
[222] Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 604-6. Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 203-4.

(77)   A: I was finally able to get the money.
        B: Then you left for America?
(78)   A: The prince proposed to Cinderella.
        B: And her step-sisters couldn't maltreat her any more?

In each of (76) – (78), the second sentence echoes what B considers an implicature of A's utterance. Thus targets of echo questions may be utterances or unexpressed thoughts.

4.4.3. Resemblance and Contrastive Stress in Echo Question

As discussed above, echo questions may or may not be a repetition of previous utterances and they may echo unexpressed thoughts. The issue is then how to identify what utterance or thought an echo question is representing.

The relationship between an echo question and the utterance or thought it represents is that of resemblance. Echo questions resemble utterances or thoughts they represent in some respect. This resemblance may be in a linguistic form such as shared phonetic or lexical item as in (69) or in content (meaning) as in (76) – (78) above. [223]

Not every part of an echo question is equally relevant. According to Blakemore the relevance of echo questions "hinges on their being some part of [the echoed] utterance" represented. [224] The most relevant part is marked by contrastive/focal stress in spoken utterances. [225] Stress is not always marked in texts and thus has to be inferred from the appropriate context.

4.5.   Summary

In this section, three RT accounts of echo question have been discussed. It is indicated that the difference is a reflection of the stages of development of the account. According

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[223] Blakemore, 'Echo Questions: A Pragmatic Account,' 207.
[224] Ibid., 205, 207.
[225] Ibid., 205-206. Iwata, 'Echo Questions Are Interrogatives?' 210-11. The focally stressed part, also called focused metarepresentation, serves the purpose of guiding the search for relevance (i.e. the resemblance between echo question and the original representation). Focal stress is responsible for communicating attitude through echo questions. Noh, 'Echo Questions: Metarepresentation and Pragmatic Enrichment,' 610. Artstein ('A Focus Semantics for Echo Questions,' 98–107) sees echo question simply as focus.

to all of these views, echo questions are attributive. According to Blakemore and Noh, echo questions are essentially echoic but this is rejected by Iwata.

It has been argued that the analysis of echo questions as a syntactic category is not compatible with RT's conception of "echo" and that what makes a question echoic is not its form but rather the fact that they are used to express attitude. Thus when a question, such as an interrogative, is used to communicate attitude, it is echoic. I have also indicated that, in this thesis, the phrase "echo question" is used to refer to questions that are used to communicate the user's attitude.

The range of attitude communicated by using echo questions is that of doubt, questioning or rejecting the validity of the echoed thought or utterance. Echo questions can be used to challenge not only utterances but thoughts. An echo question resembles the original thought or utterance in form or content.

5. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a brief overview of theories of verbal communication has been given. I have also discussed RT notion of verbal communication at some length, outlining how relevance guides utterance production and comprehension. The bulk of the chapter was then devoted to the discussion of three echoic utterances, primarily verbal irony but also denial and echo questions.

According to RT, verbal irony is echoic: the communicator of an ironic utterance tacitly attributes the utterance to someone else and tacitly dissociates from it in order to communicate her attitude to the attributed utterance. The ironic utterance resembles the original in either form or content or both. The type of attitude communicated by using irony is that of tacit dissociation, including taunting, censure or derision. RT's echoic account of verbal irony also accounts well for other features of irony such as the ironic victim, the ironic asymmetry and the ironic tone of voice.

Metalinguistic negation (denial) is an echoic use of an utterance in which, at least, part of the utterance that falls under the scope of negation is tacitly attributed and echoed and overtly rejected. The negated material resembles its original counterpart in shared

formal or meaning properties. The type of attitude specific to denial is that of rejection. Denial has several optional features such as truth-conditionality of the utterance negated, follow-up or corrective clauses, a previous utterance to which it is a rejoinder and pragmatic reanalysis of garden-pathing.

Echo questions are echoic in that the communicator tacitly attributes her utterances to someone else in order to communicate an attitude of questioning or disbelief to the echoed utterance. Echo questions can be used in this way to challenge not only utterances but also thoughts. An echo question resembles the original thought or utterance in form or content.

Verbal irony, denial and echo questions share all the three characteristics of echoic metarepresentations: they are attributive, echoic and attitudinal. They belong together in the class of echoic utterances. They express the communicator's attitude to either an immediate specific utterance or a distant, general thought such as a social norm. Attitude may be expressed towards the whole of the utterance or to some aspects of it. These echoic utterances resemble the original utterances in some formal or meaning properties.

However, verbal irony, denial and echo questions differ in the specific type of attitude they are used to communicate and in the way they communicate them as indicated in the table below.

	Verbal irony	Denial	Echo questions
Type of attitude communicated	*Dissociation* from the utterance/thought echoed	*Negation*/rejection of the utterance/thought echoed	*Questioning*, puzzlement at or disbelief of the echoed utterance/thought
Manner of communication	tacit	explicit	*explicit
*Since questions can be marked by intonation alone, one has to depend on context to identify such questions in written texts where intonation is not always marked.			

Interpreting verbal irony, denial and echo questions requires recognition of not only the echoic nature of the utterance but also the specific attitude it is intended to communicate.

The present thesis will assume the validity of the echoic theory and apply it to passages in Malachi in chapter 3 and 4. The three features of echoic utterances, attribution, echo and attitude will be used in analyzing some key utterances in Mal 1:2-14 and 2:17-3:12. The notion of relevance will be used in the major arguments for echoic readings of some of the utterances in the passages. The notion will also be employed in making cases for particular interpretations pertinent to the main arguments. The RT notion of style will also be used to indicate the presence of pragmatic reanalysis (cf. 1:2-5 and 6-14; 3:1 and 2-5; 3:6b and 7a) and parallelism (3:6a and 6b).

III.   Examination of Malachi 1:2-5

There is a unanimous agreement on the importance of Mal 1:2-5 as an introduction to the whole book.[1] Its significance is especially highlighted by the fact that any interpretation of this first pericope has definite implications for understanding the rest of the book. Some believe that it states the theme of the book.[2] Others have even gone as far as claiming that the theme and structure of the pericope set the pattern for the rest of the book.[3] However not all agree on the message of the pericope itself. In fact, Mal 1:2-5 seems to be one of the highly contested texts in the book.

The author of Malachi organises his materials around a question and answer format. The initial statement prompts a hearers' question, which is then followed by an extended response thereby facilitating the progress of the discourse into a full blown explanation. As such, the nature of the response to the question determines the point of the passage.

2 אָהַבְתִּי אֶתְכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה וַאֲמַרְתֶּם בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ
הֲלוֹא־אָח עֵשָׂו לְיַעֲקֹב נְאֻם־יְהוָה וָאֹהַב אֶת־יַעֲקֹב:
3 וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי
וָאָשִׂים אֶת־הָרָיו שְׁמָמָה וְאֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְתַנּוֹת מִדְבָּר:
4 כִּי־תֹאמַר אֱדוֹם רֻשַּׁשְׁנוּ וְנָשׁוּב וְנִבְנֶה חֳרָבוֹת
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הֵמָּה יִבְנוּ וַאֲנִי אֶהֱרוֹס
וְקָרְאוּ לָהֶם גְּבוּל רִשְׁעָה וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר־זָעַם יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם:
5 וְעֵינֵיכֶם תִּרְאֶינָה וְאַתֶּם תֹּאמְרוּ יִגְדַּל יְהוָה מֵעַל לִגְבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Following YHWH's opening statement אֲהַבְתִּי אֶתְכֶם, and the immediate question posed by the addressees בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ, an interpreter of Mal 1:2-5 is faced with several interpretive issues, the most important one being how YHWH answers the question. This is the overall question of how the dialogue is relevant to the people being addressed.

An interpreter must also give account of other pertinent issues. First, what is the significance of Esau/Edom in the dialogue? Second, how is the apparent arbitrariness in

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[1] Verhoef *Haggai and Malachi*, 194-5.
[2] Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 19.
[3] Botha, 'Die Belang van Maleagi 1:2-5,' 495.

YHWH's choice to hate Esau and judge Edom for undisclosed guilt, to be explained? Finally, what is the role of the context? Specifically, how does Mal 1:2-5 link with the following passages?

In this chapter, I will investigate existing readings in sections 1 & 2 and will argue for a new reading in section 3. Particularly, I will argue that the passage is ironic according to the definition outlined in Chapter 2. I will do this by reading the passage in the larger discourse context of 1:2-14.

1. Literal Readings of Malachi 1:2-5

Almost all existing interpretations regard Mal 1:2-5 as an affirmation of Yahweh's love for Israel.[4] Most of these share the assumption that the purpose of the passage is to prove YHWH's love for a suffering people who found their unfulfilled expectations to be disappointing and as a result began questioning whether God loves them. According to this position, Yahweh is telling his people to see the evidence of the continuity of his love in the situation of a trouble-stricken neighbouring nation, Edom. Far fewer studies maintain that the passage is intended to remind the people of YHWH's unconditional love in order to either substantiate his criticism of them or motivate them for obedience in the remainder of the book.

Unlike with the overall issue of the relevance of YHWH's reply to people's question, studies of Mal 1:2-5 show greater variation with regard to their approaches to the other related issues. First, they differ in their explanations of the issues themselves. Second, not all interpretations explain all the issues. Some are more comprehensive than others. Third, they give more weight to different issues. Generally, the issue of context has been given less attention. In this section, I will categorise and discuss existing interpretations based on how they give account of the significance of the Esau/Edom situation, the ethical issue that Yahweh's contrastive attitudes may entail, and the question of context.

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[4] Blake reads it as irony according to the traditional definition of the term; See I.5.2 above and III.2 below.

1.1.   The Relevance of Esau/Edom

Scholars agree that what underscores the rhetoric significance of Edom's situation in Mal 1:2-5 has to do with the geo-ethnic relationship between Israel and Edom. However, they differ as to what exactly this relationship is: brotherhood or rivalry. The relevance of Edom in the context differs depending on which aspect of the relationship is considered. Even within the same view, there are various ways in which the use of Edom is explained. Moreover, there are different accounts of Esau/Edom in the HB and this difference needs to be explained before the account in Mal 1:2-5 is dealt with. In this sub-section, I will, first, present an overview of the Esau/Edom tradition in the HB and, then, discuss various views along with how the idea of fraternity and hostility are believed to be employed by the author to make a point.

1.1.1. The Esau/Edom Tradition

Studies of texts involving Esau/Edom have shown that the relationship between the brothers Jacob and Esau on one hand and the ethnic Israel and Edom on the other makes one of the most complex traditions in the Hebrew Bible. The main puzzling question is how traditions involving Esau/Edom and Jacob/Israel as brothers relate to those that depict them as opponents.

The Esau/Edom passages are found in various forms as narratives, genealogies, Psalms and prophetic literature.[5] The narrative accounts involving Esau/Edom are mainly concentrated in Genesis with the rest scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible. Narrative passages containing Esau/Edom tradition: Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45; 32:4-22; 33:1-17; Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:2-6, 8; 23:7-8; 2 Samuel 8:13-14; 1 Kings 11:15-16; 22:47; 2 Kings 8:20-22; 14:7, 22; 16:6; 1 Chronicles 18:12-13; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10; 25:11-12; 26:2; 28:16-18; Psalms 60:8, 9. The genealogies of Esau/Edom are also heavily present in Genesis (36:1-43) with several of them located in other few parts of the HB including 1 Chronicles 1:35-54. The prophetic corpus involving the tradition seems to be generally disapproving of Esau/Edom. The prophetic oracles in which Esau/Edom appears are Obadiah, Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 25:8, 12-14; 32:29; 35:1-36:5; Isaiah 11:14; 21:11; 34; 63:1; Amos 1:11-12; 9:12; Joel 3:19 etc.

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[5] Tebes, 'You Shall not Abhor an Edomite,' 5, 6; Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 13; Bartlett, 'The Brotherhood of Edom,' 2; Assis, 'Why Edom?' 1.

The biblical accounts of Esau/Edom and Jacob/Israel show great variation with regard to the way they present their character Esau/Edom. Generally, two contrasting dispositions towards Edom can be identified, one positive and the other negative. It has been accepted that generally the Pentateuchal accounts paint a rather positive picture of Esau/Edom. However, even there, Esau/Edom is presented as both a brother and a rival.[6] The prophetic oracles are considered to be highly condemnatory.[7] How and why these various perspectives of Esau/Edom came to exist has puzzled biblical scholarship. A number of proposals have been put forward.[8]

Some scholars posit that two polar views of Edom, one against and the other for Edom existed side by side in Israel. Cresson, for instance, distinguishes between two contemporaneous opposing views in early exilic and post-exilic Judaism regarding the restoration of Israel. These views, universalism and nationalism, according to Cresson, were inseparably linked like the two sides of a coin. The universalistic view allowed for the possibility of the nations converting to Yahweh. The particularistic view, on the other hand, was exclusive and regarded the destruction of the nations as a precondition to Israel's restoration. According to Cresson, "it was this type of thought that fathered Damn-Edom theology."[9]

The most widespread view, however, is that the variation is a result of a change in the dynamics of the relationship between Edom and Israel in the run up to and the aftermath of the exile. According to these views, the relationship between the two nations, which was initially good, turned sour because of Edom's actual or perceived hostile behaviour. They maintain that Edom collaborated with Babylon during the exile and took possession of the land of Judah in the wake of the event. The condemnation of Edom in

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[6] Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 134-6.

[7] For instance, Tebes, 'You Shall not Abhor an Edomite,' 5; Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 252; Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 201.

[8] Such as orality and migration: Tebes, 'You Shall not Abhor an Edomite,' 2-30; J. C. Dykehouse, 'An Historical Reconstruction of Edomite Treaty Betrayal in the Sixth Century B.C.E. Based on Biblical, Epigraphic, and Archaeological Data' (PhD Thesis, Baylor University, 2008).

[9] Cresson, 'The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism,' 147. The universalistic view is widely believed to be reflected in Mal 1:11 (see III.1.3.1 below). If Mal 1:11 is regarded as representing the universalistic view, it is highly likely that Malachi's presentation of YHWH's attitude to Edom cannot be a genuine assertion.

the prophetic literature is, they argue, a reflection of bitter feelings of resentment toward Edom.[10]

A recent work by Anderson, for instance, offers a canonical explanation of the variations in the treatment of Edom in the Hebrew Bible. He argues that the traditions can be understood in terms of their common subject matter, namely kinship (brotherhood) and inheritance (possession of land).

The variation in the treatment of the subject in Genesis, Deuteronomy and the prophetic literature, maintains Anderson, is to be explained as a consequence of Edom's behaviour towards YHWH and Israel. In Genesis, though at first displeased with the loss of the birthright and his father's blessing, Esau behaves kindly towards his brother Jacob and paves the way for peace by moving to Seir. In Deuteronomy, the Israelites are instructed against incursion into the possession of the Edomites, their brothers, and Edomites are welcome into the community of Israel as kith and kin.[11] In the prophetic literature, however, according to Anderson, Edom is regarded as an enemy because it failed to behave as a brother and took possession of the land of Israel.[12]

Another work by Dicou provides an extensive literary-historical treatment of Edom in the Old Testament.[13] His particular purpose is to trace "the origin and the development of Edom's exceptional role" through both synchronic and diachronic analysis of relevant texts in Genesis and the Prophetic literature, primarily Obadiah.[14]

According to Dicou, both the Genesis account of Edom and the corresponding prophetic oracles treat Edom similarly as antagonist and representative of the enemy nations.[15] Yet, they differ in their depictions of Edom's future: the Genesis stories "describe a peaceful meeting of the brothers, resulting in Esau's going back to Seir, and Jacob's return to the promised land" and depict a "peaceful organization of the various nations"

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[10] Ibid., 125-48.
[11] Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 250-52.
[12] Ibid., 252.
[13] Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*. [This work is a continuation of his dissertation, B. Dicou, Jakob en Esau, Israel en Edom: Israel tegenover de volken in de verhalen over Jakob en Esau in Genesis en in de grote profetieen over Edom' (Voorburg, 1990).]
[14] Ibid., 16.
[15] Ibid., 199-200.

(cf. *Toledoth* structure). The prophetic oracles, on the other hand, call for the destruction of Edom and regard it "as a nation of the same category as Babylon, and had to suffer the same fate (Isa. 34; Jer. 49:17-21)." [16]

Thus, according to Dicou, there is only one view of Edom, that is, Edom as Israel's antagonist and representative of the enemy nations. The difference between the accounts in the prophetic oracles and accounts elsewhere lies in their proposal for the fulfilment of the post-exilic repossession of the land and how Edom relinquishes the possession thereof. Genesis promotes a peaceful reclamation of the land, whereas the prophetic oracles advocate Edom's destruction for the realization of the restoration of Israel.

To recap, we have seen that there are differing accounts of the Esau/Edom tradition in the HB. Accounts in the prophetic literature are generally critical of Edom. The critical account of the tradition is motivated by the change in the dynamics of the relationship between the two nations. Having laid the context, we will now look at how existing views of Mal 1:2-5 explain the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition in the passage.

1.1.2. Historical Significance: Edom as a Brother or Enemy

Some scholars see Edom's rhetorical import in YHWH's attempt to offer a suitable comparison between Israel and its ethnic affiliate and neighbour. A more destitute neighbour, Edom presents itself as a fitting showcase for YHWH who could contend that the people of Judah were in a relatively better situation, which therefore indicates his love. According to scholars such as Pfeiffer, Yahweh presents evidences of his love for Israel through comparison between Judah's situations with that of the nation of Edom. Edom was destroyed and their effort to rebuild was frustrated while apparently Israel did not experience such a disaster:

> In the preamble (1:2-5), the Lord proves the depth and constancy of his love for Israel by pointing to the contrasting fate of Israel and her brother Edom: the land of Edom has been devastated [by a wave of Arabian invaders…] and the attempts of the Edomites to rebuild their ruined homes avail nothing against the decision of the Lord, whose jurisdiction extends beyond the borders of Israel. [17]

[16] Ibid., 201.

[17] R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948) 612; S. L. Edgar, *The Minor Prophets*, 98.

However, this interpretation downplays the significance of Esau/Edom and renders the author's reasoning ridiculously immature and shallow. Thus Pfeiffer considers Malachi's argument "childish" and the audience "simple souls." According to Pfeiffer the author "was not a deep thinker. He was addressing simple souls, and his arguments are therefore rather childish. As evidence of God's continued love for his people he reminded his listeners that the Edomites were in a worse state than they (1:2-5)!"[18]

Likewise, Edgar lambasts Malachi's answer to the people's question as "surprising for its lack of depth," and unacceptable. According to Edgar, the comparison between love for Israel and hate for Edom does not have any real significance: "Malachi's answer to the people's doubt is surprising for its lack of depth. He relies on contrasts in making his point. God's love for Israel is to be seen by comparison with the fate of Edom. The reasoning is not altogether acceptable to us."[19]

Other commentators maintain that the significance of Edom is to highlight that the people of Judah have received YHWH's favour undeservedly. According to Augustine, for instance, the passage is concerned with showing Jacob the grace of God so that the people of Israel would not boast of their status before God as being a result of their work, i.e. merited:

> ...although they were of the same father, the same mother, the same conception, before they had done anything good or evil God loved the one and hated the other, so that Jacob might understand that he was of the same clay of original sin as his brother, with whom he shared a common origin, and thus he sees that he is distinguished from him by grace alone.[20]

Such a reading of the passage is also advocated by later scholars. According to Calvin, for instance, the contrasting statements of love for Jacob and hate for Esau deepen the conviction of the people of Israel of the undeserved favour they were given. This is so

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[18] Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 615.
[19] Edgar, *The Minor Prophets*, 99-100.
[20] Augustine Letter 194 to Sixtus; http://www.romancatholicism.org/jansenism/augustine-194.htm, accessed 12 May 2012.

because "all the Jews knew that Esau was the first-born; and that hence Jacob had obtained the right of primogeniture contrary to the order of nature."[21]

It is difficult to maintain that the import of Edom in this passage is to demonstrate the gratuitous nature of God's grace given to Israel. It is not clear why YHWH should destroy Edom in order to demonstrate his undeserved favour.

Many scholars, therefore, emphasise ethnic rivalry, rather than fraternity, as the reason for Edom's suitability in what they see as an act of assuring Judah of YHWH's enduring love. For instance, Glazier-McDonald believes that Malachi appeals to a disaster that was experienced by Edom, Israel's kin but rival neighbour, as evidence of Yahweh's love for Israel. According to Glazier-McDonald, while the nations' geographic and ethnic affiliation might have led to an expectation of "similar treatment by Yahweh," the prevalent enmity between them made Malachi's appeal to Edom's plight suitable for his purpose.

> The habitual antagonism between the two nations found release through many outlets: through war, mutual recriminations and jealousy...Malachi's appeal to a disaster which had recently befallen Edom, as evidence of Yahweh's love for Israel, was thus one eminently suited to evoke an immediate response in the hearts of his contemporaries.[22]

Glazier-McDonald offers a reconstruction of a historical event that might have been the basis of Malachi's statement of "proof" and "prediction" and concludes that Mal 1:3 refers to a gradual settlement in and takeover of Edom by the Nabataeans.[23]

However, according to Bartlett, such a gradual process of settlement is not likely to be referred to by a description like Mal 1:3, which seems to paint a rather spectacular event.[24] Moreover, Glazier-McDonald's reconstruction involves a lot of guesses and speculations and thus does not offer sure insight into the matter and may not even be necessary to uncover the meaning of the text. According to Petersen the "historical dynamics between Judah and Edom were, indeed, complex. Malachi 1, however, does

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[21] Calvin, *Zechariah and Malachi*, 465. See also Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, 512; Clendenen, 'Malachi,' 255-6.

[22] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 34.

[23] Ibid., 35-41. See also C. C. Torrey, 'The Edomites in Southern Judah,' *JBL* 17, 1 (1898) 16-20. Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 305 who notes "special antipathy" and aggravation of this during the events of exile as well as brotherhood relationship between Esau and Jacob in his discussion of this pericope.

[24] Bartlett "Edom and the Fall of Jerusalem," 15.

not focus on that strident relationship. Moreover, it would be a fundamental mistake to think that a historical reconstruction will serve as an interpretation of the text."[25]

Petersen himself argues that Yahweh's opposition to Edom in Malachi is specifically a matter of "violation of a covenant" with Edom, Israel's enemy, so as to stand in solidarity with the latter, thereby proving his love for Israel.[26]

> Yahweh had given Mount Se'ir to Edom (Deut. 2:4-5). Hence, if Yahweh is going to demonstrate special favour to Judah, what better way to do it than by desolating Edom's hills, which had been Esau's special gift...Yahweh has been able to demonstrate covenant loyalty, "love", by cursing Israel's enemies and by violating his earlier grant of land to Edom.[27]

According to Petersen, Yahweh's articulation of his deeds against Edom in terms of revocation of covenantal relationship as a show of solidarity with Israel is a presentation of his evidence to assure the latter of the continuity of his love.

Petersen's covenant-violation hypothesis raises more questions concerning Edom: on what basis does Yahweh ends his covenant with Edom? Is the covenant with Edom contingent upon its relationship with Israel? Was the covenant with Edom secondary to the one with Israel? Petersen himself admits that Yahweh's change of mind is surprising and unusual.[28]

1.1.3. Israel's Perception of Edom

Scholars such as Bartlett and Assis argue that the negative attitude against Edom in the HB reflects Israel's own perception of Edom. As such, the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5 has to do with how Israel regards the Edomites.[29]

Bartlett believes that the negative prophetic treatment of and attitude towards Edom in the HB can be explained as a legacy of Edom's war of independence in which Israel lost its dominance over Edom at the time of the reign of Joram (2 Ki 8:20).[30] According to Bartlett, from the event of Edom's struggle for independence and its persistent

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[25] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 172.
[26] Ibid., 167-73.
[27] Ibid., 170, 173.
[28] Ibid., 170.
[29] Bartlett, 'Edom and the Fall of Jerusalem'; Assis, 'Why Edom?' See also Brockington, 'Malachi,' 586.
[30] Ibid.,,' 13, 15.

aftermath emanated all sorts of hateful attitudes and expressions. A tradition was formed in which Edom came to be depicted in terms that highlight its cruelty such as that he "pursued his brother with the sword" (Amos 1:11).[31] Later Edom was credited with attitudes and actions against Judah in the context of its exile without any of those actions being historical events.

> A review of the complaints made against Edom shows very clearly that Edom has been falsely maligned. The roots of Judah's hatred for Edom go back to the monarchic period; the Davidic conquest of Edom and Edom's later successful fight for independence left a legacy of bitterness which turned Edom into the archetypal enemy of Judah. When Judah fell to the Babylonians, and Edom remains unscathed, it was inevitable that Edom should come in for harsh language.[32]

Bartlett argues that ascriptions of attitudes to Edom such as rejoicing over Judah's destruction (Lam 4:21 p.18 cf. Mal 1:5) and voicing a desire for its annihilation (Ps. 137:7; Obad 12-14) are poetic and imaginative than historical.[33] In a brief remark, Bartlett relates his discussion to Mal 1:2-5 stating that "no explanation was given" for hating Edom.[34] The obvious implication is that it was, as any other prophetic criticism of Edom, part of an established tradition expressing a negative sentiment arising from a feeling against a rebellious former colony. The implication of Bartlett's observation of the fact that there is no specific guilt attached to Edom in Mal 1:2-5 is significant for understanding its peculiar depiction in Malachi in particular.

A more recent work by Assis brings yet another perspective on the significance of Edom in Malachi in terms of conflict between Israel and Edom.[35] Following his critique of various scholarly opinions on depictions of Edom in the prophetic literature, he forwards his own proposal explaining why there was negative attitude toward Edom. Assis argues that Israel's attitude to Edom and the hostility towards the Edomites in the Prophets has to do with the "ideological and theological significance that Judah assigned to Edom's acts" of possessing its land.

According to Assis, the Edomites took possession of the land of Judah and, as a result, the people of Israel thought that God has rejected them and chosen the people of Edom

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[31] Ibid., 19.
[32] Ibid., 23.
[33] Ibid., 20-21.
[34] Ibid., 19.
[35] Assis, 'Why Edom?' 11.

instead. The significance of Edom in Mal 1:2-5 is thus to show the people of Israel that they are still the chosen people, not the Edomites.

> In this oracle, the prophet debates with the people. His answer reflects and contests the view held by the people. The people claimed that God does not love them, and Malachi in reply says that God loves Israel. As grounds for this claim, Malachi indicates that God abhors Esau...The fact that Israel is the chosen people is based on the claim that Edom is rejected, apparently because the people thought that God had chosen Edom in their stead... Malachi explains that Edom has been dispossessed of its land, and this is proof that they are rejected by God, even though they now dwell in the land of Judah.[36]

Assis claims that the prophet assigns to Israel the view that Edom was chosen and Israel was rejected. Mal 1:2-5 is a response to this view in that it affirms that YHWH actually hates Edom. Assis' observation that there is an attribution of belief to Israel is noteworthy. However, his view of Edom's prophetic criticism in general and its significance in Malachi in particular is considerably speculative. For instance, there is little evidence that the people of Judah had the concern that Edom replaced Israel as a chosen nation. In fact, the criticism that the audience of Malachi endures indicates that the opposite is true, i.e., the people of Judah seem to have taken for granted their status as a special people accepted by YHWH (cf. 1:10-11).

The other weakness with Assis' proposal is that it puts the prophet on a weaker position than the people. The prophet presents the removal the Edomites from Seir as a proof of Yahweh's hatred or rejection of them. However, Edom's leaving Seir does not matter as far as they are in possession of the Promised Land. The situation that the people of Judah interpreted as an indication of Edom's election, namely the seizure of Judah by the Edomites, would make leaving Seir irrelevant.

1.1.4. Symbolic Significance: Edom as a Type

Other scholars suggest that the significance of Edom has to do with Edom being used as a type of enemy.[37] According to Dicou, the HB, i.e., both the Genesis account[38] of

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[36] Ibid., 15, 16. See also p. 20: According to Assis, "Israel's attitude to Edom in the sixth century BCE is related to the people's feelings of despair, deriving from the view that the destruction meant that God had abandoned His people. Since Edom was seen as an alternative to Israel, being identified with Esau, Jacob's brother, it was thought possible that God had now chosen Edom as his people in place of Israel." Assis lists two reasons for this belief: 1. Edom's participation in the events of Judah's exile. 2. the seizure of the land of Judah by the Edomites. He contends that anti-Edom prophecies in the Bible had the purpose of bringing to the people of Israel the hope that God did not abandon them (14-15, 19).
[37] Cresson, 'The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism,' 147.

Edom and the corresponding prophetic oracles, treat Edom as antagonist and representative of the enemy nations.[39] Dicou maintains that Mal 1:2-5 provides a fitting conclusion to the story of Edom as antagonist and the representative of the nations, particularly as it is presented in the Book of the Twelve:

> When the Book of the Twelve is read as a continuing story, the book of Malachi should contain the conclusion of the story. As regards Israel and Edom, Mal. 1.2-5 indeed provides such a conclusion. At the end of the Twelve, the old antagonism between the two nations is considered for one more time. The passage discusses the difference when God does and when he does not love a nation.[40]

According to Kellermann, the exceptionally condemnatory oracles against Edom in the prophetic literature (including Mal 1:2-5) have their source in the ceremonial use of the name "Edom" in the cultic lament following the destruction of the temple in 587.[41] Kellermann's proposal is set to account for the similarity in motif between prophetic oracles condemning Edom and for the continuation of such negativity over a long period, both of which he believes neither historical events nor literary interdependence would sufficiently explain.

According to Kellermann, what made the condemnation of Edom persist long after the exilic events of 587 BCE is the use of its name in the cultic liturgy.[42] The similarities in motifs between different oracles condemning Edom suggest a shared tradition, i.e., cult laments. The motifs of the oracles against Edom, though not all of them always occur together, are the restoration of Israel, the judgment of the nations and the destruction of Edom.[43]

According to Kellermann's hypothesis, the people of Judah gathered to commemorate the fall of their nation. At these gatherings, the people lamented and prophets responded

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[38] Cf. the Toledoth Structure: Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 200.

[39] Ibid., 199-200.

[40] Ibid., 114.

[41] Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 228 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 188-93; for similar suggestions regarding the connection of Edom's oracles to the cult lamentation, see G. S. Ogden 'Prophetic Oracles against Foreign Nations and Psalms of Communal Lament: The Relationship of Psalm 137 to Jeremiah 49.7-22 and Obadiah,' *JSOT* (1982) 89 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 193-95.

[42] Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 20-21, 30-35, 117-20, 161-62, 225-8 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 189.

[43] Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 2-5, 5-9, 214-18 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 188, 190.

to their laments with a message of hope.[44] Edom came to be at the epicentre of the cultic

lament (and the oracles) for its perceived role in the exilic events that brought about the

destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Judah as a nation.[45] The oracles of Edom are

linked to cultic laments by virtue of their inclusion of part or all of the shared motifs.[46]

The cult lamentation setting gave rise to the motifs, not the oracles themselves. The cult

was a "general source of inspiration" for the authors of the oracles which, in most cases,

"are free interpretations of the traditional theme".[47]

Kellermann's proposal is disputed as simplifying a rather vague picture.[48] The only hard

fact is that oracles against Edom exhibit more or less of the three motifs. The existence

of public cult lament and its combination with oracular response in the liturgy is a

hypothesis based on texts that are themselves not indisputably believed to relate to

public laments. Kellermann's argument is plausible but not conclusive. Moreover, his

argument that neither textual interdependence nor historical events can explain the

persistence of oracles against Edom and their similarity in motifs is questionable.

However, his proposal is a clear indication of the diversity of possible sources which the

Esau/Edom texts in the HB, including Mal 1:2-5, could draw upon.

Both accounts (Dicou and Kellermann) observe three important elements in Esau/Edom

tradition: Edom, Israel and the nations. These elements are present in Malachi with

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[44] Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 228 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 189. The cultic memorial gatherings were reconstructed from Lamentations and relevant passages in the Psalms. This is also supported by a reference to such commemorative events (as fasts of mourning) in Zech 7:3, 5; 8:19. Other evidences cited by scholars include the ongoing Jewish commemoration of the destruction of the temple involving the reading of Lamentations. P.R. Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon and Persia* (Oxford, 1970) 17-8; Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 30 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 189-90.

[45] The inclusion of Edom in the cult laments that are believed to make the background for later prophetic oracles against it, is, at least initially, due to Edom's perceived role or the absence thereof in the events of the exile: Cresson ('The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism,' 147-8) believes that anti-Edom bias started as a historical reaction to Edom's behavior towards Judah during and after exile but later developed towards a theology of Edom representing "the hostile world". Dicou, (*Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 193), suggests that Edom was included in early cult laments for historical reasons, i.e. Edom's failure to stand by Judah against its Babylonian captors.

[46] The connection is justified on grounds that "some of the (oracular?) texts" involving the "combination of motifs" have already been acknowledged as related to the public laments (Mic 7:7-10; Lam 4:21-22). Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' (30-35 on Lam. 4.21-22); 117-20 on Mic. 7.7-10) as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 190.

[47] Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 226 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 190. Kellermann believes some oracles are associated with the cult (e.g. Obad 15-18).

[48] Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, (191-2) argues that some of the texts (Lam. 4.21-22; Isa. 63.1-5) claimed to feature the trio motifs are seen to be difficult to assert as definitive. The cultic connection of some texts (e.g. Isa 51) is also contested.

"nations" removed from 1:2-5 and placed in 1:11, 14. The significance of this placement for understanding Mal 1:2-5 will be made apparent later in section 3.

Following a survey of the Esau/Edom tradition in the HB, we have seen in this sub-section that various proposals have been suggested to explain the significance of Edom in Mal 1:2-5. We have also seen that these accounts have their own limitations. First, the fraternity account downplays the significance of Edom (Pfeiffer and Edgar) and does not explain the whole issue (Augustine and Calvin). The ethnic rivalry account lacks sufficient historical evidence (Glazier-McDonald) or makes YHWH's covenant dealings inconsistent (Petersen).

Second, Assis' view that Edom's significance lies in Israel's perception of Edom's possession of the former's territory weakens YHWH's reasoning although the observations that the significance of Edom lies in Israel's perception itself is noteworthy. Also notable is the observation that there is no explicated motivation for the judgment of Edom (Bartlett).

Finally, the view that Edom's significance is symbolic helpfully notes that the import of Edom may go beyond historical events and shows the possibility of the existence of various sources for the tradition, giving a wider perspective on the issue. Kellermann's observation of the three motifs is also helpful in understanding the use of Edom in Malachi in relation to Israel (1:2-5) and the nations (1:11).

This thesis will argue that the version of the tradition that is critical of Edom (see III. 1.1.1) is used ironically to mock Israel's own assumptions. This will be done in III.3.1, 3.3 below.

1.2.   The Ethical Issue

While וָאֹהַב אֶת־יַעֲקֹב in Mal 1:2a does not pose much difficulty for readers, its antithetical statement, וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי in 1:3 has proved to be both intriguing and embarrassing for readers who see it as a direct contrast to the nature of God: is YHWH arbitrary or capricious? The problem is compounded particularly as the brotherhood of

Esau is brought into the contrast and there is no motivation for the judgment against Edom.

The ethical issue involved in this passage has been noted by scholars.[49] O'Brien's articulation of the issue is arguably the most upfront of all. She observes that "[f]ather/son language pervades the book of Malachi" noting that its prevalence "is explained by most interpreters as one of the many ways in which Malachi draws on the language and themes of the book of Deuteronomy."[50] Distinguishing between the usages in Deuteronomy and Malachi, O'Brien states that whereas the parental relationship was used for the transmission of religious instruction and the prevention of self-profanation in Deuteronomy, its purpose in Malachi is "one of sheer power."[51]

> In this opening disagreement between God and Israel, God contends that he has demonstrated his love for Jacob by hating the twin son Esau. The clear message is that Jacob only survives by the pleasure of a father who is willing to hate his own son. A father, it seems, can choose to hate his son, while a son is not granted the privilege of hating his father.[52]

The difficulty has been dealt with in various ways. Most scholars try to soften the contrast by restricting the sense of שׂנא "to hate" and the significance of the judgment of Edom.

1.2.1. Preferential Love: Hate means less love

Some propose what has come to be known as the preferential love hypothesis. According to this approach, the difference in YHWH's attitude towards Jacob and Esau is one of degree. Laetsch's words on v.3 represent this position well.

> God is not an arbitrary God…the Lord is speaking here not of absolute love embracing only one nation and of absolute hatred directed against another nation… Here the word "hate" is not used in its absolute sense...but in the sense of less love, bestow less love, fewer favours on a person.[53]

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[49] Julia M. OBrien, 'Judah as Wife and Husband: Deconstructing Gender in Malachi,' *JBL* 115:2 (1996) 241-50; R. J. Coggins, 'Malachi,' in R. J. Coggins and J. H. Han, *Six Minor Prophets through the Centuries*: *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, Blackwell Bible commentaries (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) 186-201, citing188.
[50] O'Brien, 'Judah as Wife and Husband, 241.
[51] Ibid., 242.
[52] Ibid., 242.
[53] Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, 512-3; See also Botterweck, 'Jakob habe ich lieb—Esau hasse ich,' 36-7 as cited in Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 170; Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 1–8, Sacharja 9–14, Maleachi*, 255. K. Elliger, *Das Buch der Zwölf Kleinen Propheten 2: Die Propheten Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja, Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, ATD 25, 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1982), 190 as cited in Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 234; Brockington, 'Malachi,' 656.

According to Laetsch, Malachi could not have meant something that would imply that Yahweh is unjust or arbitrary in his relationships. Therefore, any interpretation that suggests, implicitly or explicitly, that Yahweh rejected Edom is unacceptable. His own suggestion is that Yahweh, rather than making a contrast between love and hate in their absolute sense, is referring to different extents of the same concept of love. Thus Laetsch essentially means that Yahweh's attitude is that of the same essence, namely love which he expressed with different magnitudes.

Upholding Laetcsh, Clark and Hatton comment on the difficulty of translation that וָאֹהַב אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי poses and the effect of its rendering in most English versions:

> The main problem in translating this sentence lies in the verbs **loved** and **hated**. Most English versions use these words, and run the risk of representing the LORD as acting in an arbitrary and unpredictable way. Although the words are used in other contexts of ordinary human emotions, the important feature here is that they are used together to give a sharp contrast, and carry the meaning "I have loved Jacob [and his descendants] more than Esau [and his descendants]."[54]

While the effort to address the moral problem in the passage is commendable, the explanation offered by the preferential love theory has some serious weaknesses. First, it does not account for the depth of the sentiment expressed throughout the whole pericope. YHWH's hate for Edom in 1:3a is far stronger than "less love". This is clearly suggested by the fact that it is followed, in the rest of v. 3 and in v.4, by a description of calamities that the Edomites would endure.[55] These are:

1. A contemplated act of destruction:

   וָאָשִׂים אֶת־הָרָיו שְׁמָמָה וְאֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְתַנּוֹת מִדְבָּר "I have made his mountains a desolation and (given) his inheritance to the desert jackals".

2. A deliberate frustration of the hope and effort to rebuild: הֵמָּה יִבְנוּ וַאֲנִי אֶהֱרוֹס "They may build but I will tear down."

3. A decision to designate them as גְּבוּל רִשְׁעָה וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר־זָעַם יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם "a wicked territory, a people with whom YHWH is angry forever."

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[54] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. W. C. Kaiser, 'Malachi,' in *The Preacher's Commentary*, 23 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992) 447-513, citing 461.
[55]This has already been observed by many commentators; for instance see Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 170; Clendenen, 'Malachi,' 251.

Quite obviously, no one wants to do such harm to someone loved, regardless of the degree of love extended.

Second, the less-love proposal undermines the rhetorical significance of the Esau/ Edom tradition in the passage. The relevance of the statement that YHWH hates Edom must have greater relevance than asserting that YHWH loves Israel more.[56] Third, it is inconsistent to claim that אהב and שׂנא are employed to express a sharp contrast and at the same time argue for a less contrast. For instance, Clark and Hatton caution against rendering the words as expressing two distinct and polarised attitudes of Yahweh. Yet, they claim that "they [the words] are used together to give a sharp contrast."

1.2.2. Covenant and Election: Hate Means not to Choose

Other scholars seek to explain the ethical difficulty involved in the opposing attitudes of YHWH by assigning a more general sense to "love" and "hate". Smith suggests that both terms are best understood as covenantal designations:

> Malachi begins his book with a message that God still loves Israel…The word love (אהב) is a covenant word. It is also an election word…It is best to take Malachi's use of the terms "love" and "hate" in vv 2 and 3 as a covenant language. When Yahweh says, "I have loved Jacob," he means, "I chose Jacob," and when he says, "I hated Esau," he means, "I did not choose Esau.[57]

Smith rejects the English word "hate" as too strong to render the Hebrew word שׂנא in this passage though he admits that "…also there is probably an overtone of bitterness here directed at Edom."[58] Smith seems to distinguish between Esau and Edom, with Esau simply left un-chosen but Edom punished harshly for harming Israel.

Later studies explicitly draw distinction between Esau and Edom in Mal 1:3a and 3b-4.[59] For instance, Anderson argues that Mal 1:3a must be analyzed separately from 3b. According to him, there is no (necessary?) causal relationship between the two clauses

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[56]See also Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 200.
[57] Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 305. See also Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 195; Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 77, 81. See also, Edgar, *The Minor Prophets*, 100; Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 243-4; G. P. Hugenberger, 'Malachi,' in D. A. Carson et al (eds.), *New Bible Commentary: 21st Edition* (England, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1953, 1954, 1970, 1994) 883-9, citing 885.
[58] Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 305.
[59] Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance'; J. Rogerson, 'Malachi,' in J. Barton and J. Muddiman (eds.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (UK, Oxford: Oxford University Press) 615-7 citing 616.

and thus between Yahweh's hate for Esau (3a) and the following description of Edom's situation (3b-4). According to Anderson, Esau and Edom in Mal 1:3-4 are different: "Esau" refers to Jacob's son whereas "Edom" represents Esau's descendants. He argues that these two different situations were cited as proofs of Yahweh's love for Israel.[60] Both passages are concerned with different evidences of love for Jacob: 2-3a is about choice of Jacob over Esau whereas 3b and the following are about judgment of Edom for its attitude and behaviour against Israel.[61]

Anderson claims that Edom is thought to have violated the relationship of brotherhood and encroached on Israel's inheritance.[62] He argues that the harsh treatment that Edom receives in the Prophets is indicative of Yahweh's response to Edom. Edom, unlike Esau, responded to their obligation with regard to brotherhood and inheritance in a negative way, i.e., Edom failed to behave like a brother and held the land of Israel. This resulted in Yahweh's response in judgment. Put in short, Yahweh responded to the Edomites in judgment because they did not live up to the responsibility of relating to Yahweh and others.[63]

Anderson's proposal that 3a and 3b have different referents is difficult to maintain. This is because 3b is inseparably linked to 3a in that the desolation of the land of Edom in 3b has no target referent other than Esau in 3a. It is clear that the pronominal suffixes on הָרָיו and נַחֲלָתוֹ refer back to Esau. Moreover, Edom is introduced in v. 4 in a manner that shows the referent is already established in the discourse, i.e., as vowing to return and rebuild obviously as the victim of the desolation of the land of Esau (3b). Therefore, Edom is not introduced as a new subject into the discourse but as a different reference to Esau in 3a. Edom appears in v. 4 as reacting to the situation described in v. 3b which itself is concerned with the situation of Esau in 3a.

The covenant-and-election view is hardly convincing as an explanation for the use of antonymous terms, love and hate, in Mal 1:2-3a. Moreover, it does not account for

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[60] Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 236, 241, 242, 243-5.
[61] Ibid., 241.
[62] Ibid., 247, 252, 254.
[63] Ibid., 253-4.

YHWH's judgment of Edom in vv. 3b-4. The attempt to distinguish Esau in v. 3a and Edom in vv. 3b-4 is problematic.

1.2.3. A Salvation Oracle: Love Is the Focus

Weyde argues that the absence of any reason for the judgment of Edom in Malachi is significant since elsewhere in HB, particularly the Prophets, there is always a motivation for such a condemnation.[64] The explanation for the unmotivated judgment, according to him, is that the passage is a "salvation oracle" and as such its primary concern is the election of Israel and not the rejection of Edom.

> Why is there no motivation for the announcement of disaster against Edom in Mal 1:4a?
> On the basis of the form-critical observations above, one may answer as follows: since Mal 1:2-5 contains a divine salvation oracle to the addressees, YHWH's election of them is in focus, and not the rejection of Edom; his rejection of Edom 'forever' (v. 4) is elaborated to emphasise a positive message: YHWH's covenantal faithfulness to those addressed. The unmotivated announcement of disaster against Edom stresses that the election of the addressees remains unchanged.[65]

Weyde's recognition of the significance of the absence of any guilt for which Edom is punished is noteworthy. Yet, his conclusion that the absence of guilt is to take Esau/Edom out of focus is not convincing. Just how such a significant omission of any justification for Edom's destruction can de-emphasise the importance of Edom is far from obvious. Nor is it apparent that the violence against Edom can be justified even if its description served only as a background.

Moreover, Weyde's conclusion is based on his form-critical analysis of the passage by which he seems to suggest that a given form has a fixed meaning. It has been discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis that utterances are processed in a context which the audience chooses under the constraint of relevance. It is difficult, therefore, to maintain that the role of Edom in Mal 1:2-5 can be inferred from the form of the passage. It is one thing to identify a form of a text but it is another to assign a particular function to the form in a particular context.

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[64] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 93-4.
[65] Ibid., 94. Similarly, Snyman maintains that the chiastic construction in vv. 2d-3a suggests that the passage is (primarily?) about YHWH's love for Israel, not his hate for Edom: S. D. Snyman, 'Antitheses in Mal 1:2-5,' *ZAW* 98, 3 (1986) 436-8, citing 437-8.

A salvation oracle, however the designation may let us expect its purpose, may not be limited to conveying a comforting message. The purpose of a salvation oracle has to be drawn from the context in which it occurs.[66] It can be employed for different purposes. For instance, in 1 Kings 22:14-17 the prophet Micaiah delivers a message of victory encouraging King Ahab to declare a war. It is only when the king insisted that the prophet be sincere that he brought the true message of loss and death. Moreover, determining the meaning from the form one assigns to Mal 1:2-5 could also suggest a different reading in which Edom is seen as a focus, such as "oracle against a foreign nation", which, in fact, is what Stuart argues to be the case here.[67]

The absence of justification of the judgment against Edom in our passage can be explained differently. According to Heimerdinger, unexpectedness is one of the pragmatic features of information foregrounding in Hebrew narratives.[68] Now, as an answer to the question בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ, Mal 1:3-4 is unexpected. First, the questioner is not likely to know the answer. Second, the specific answer, namely, YHWH's hate for Esau/Edom is even more difficult to predict. Third, the exaggerated expressions of hate, destruction and complete annihilation of Edom coupled with the absence of guilt to justify such acts are all hardly expected. This unexpectedness highlights the importance of the account of Edom in Mal 1:3-4. Indeed, there is more to the role of Edom in the passage than Weyde claims.

1.3. The Question of Context

Situated at the beginning of the book, Mal 1:2-5 presents readers with the disadvantage of not having a preceding context in which to analyze it. One has to entirely depend on the following sections and the whole book at large. Scholars generally treat the passage in isolation. Some of the few proposals aiming to locate Mal 1:2-5 in the wider discourse context will be discussed below.

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[66] See P. B. Harner, 'The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah,' *JBL*, 88, 4 (1969) 418-34, citing 431-2. Harner attempts to demonstrate the relationship between salvation oracles in Second Isaiah (the word of God) to their preceding contexts (explanation by the prophet). In other words, salvation oracles make up only one part of the context where the other accompanying factors play their own roles in the process of interpretation.
[67] Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1281, 1282.
[68] J.-M. Heimerdinger, *Topic, Focus and Foreground in Ancient Hebrew Narratives*, JSOTSS 295 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 225-7.

1.3.1. Love as a Positive Motivation

The majority of those scholars attempting to explain the relationship of Mal 1:2-5 to its context maintain that what connects the passage to the rest of the book is that it offers hope and encouragement as a motivation for the people to return to YHWH. This is needed, they argue, to exhort the people to attain the desired cultic and moral standard in the face of suffering. As such, the criticism of the moral lapse in Judah, some of which resulted from difficult life situations, is balanced by a strong assurance of the love of YHWH. The proponents of this view often cite Mal 3:6 to support their position, saying that the text is about YHWH's unchanging love.[69]

Clendenen, for instance, argues that the expression of Yahweh's love for Israel is used as a positive motivation for right worship: "God's love is used as a positive motivation primarily in the exhortation of the priesthood in 1:2-2:9 and secondarily for all the exhortations throughout the book."[70] Love as a motivation in this passage is the outworking of Clendenen's approach to Malachi as a hortatory discourse in which exhortations and motivations are used to effect a desirable change within the audience.

However, the immediate literary unit that starts at v. 6 is highly critical of Israel, making the transition so abrupt and thus casting doubt over the uplifting character of the preceding pericope. Moreover, whether Mal. 3:6 is about an assurance of love is itself open to discussion.[71] Finally, those who hold to love-as-positive-motivation face the need to account for the disparity between a particularistic orientation of Mal 1:2-4 (if interpreted as assertions) and texts with a universalistic tendency, such as Mal 1:11. Little satisfactory explanation is given, however.

For example, Smith appeals to Vriezen who argues, on the basis of general designations of God such as El, Elohim, Adonai, Father in Mal 1:6, 9; 2:10 and the reference to creation in Mal 2:10, that Malachi has a broad view of God. According to Vriezen,

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[69] For instance, Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi,* 195.
[70] Clendenen, 'Malachi,' 244-5. See Calvin's view below; it is interesting to see how the same idea of "love" vs. "hate" in 1:2-5 is treated as both "positive motivation" (Clendenen) and negative motivation (Calvin, *Zechariah and Malachi*, 325, 464, 466).
[71] Mal 3:6 will be treated under chapter IV of this thesis.

"Malachi is anything but a purely particularistic preacher, the comforting words at the beginning of the book do not contrast with the latter message."[72]

Likewise, in his critique of those who hold that Mal 1:2-5 reflects a narrow nationalistic view, Anderson points to the very fact that the subsequent sections are critical of Israel.

> If anything, the totality of the book offers a substantial critique of Israel that far outweighs the mention of Esau and Edom. Indeed, there seems to be an important correlation between YHWH's love and the chastisement which follows. There are, to be sure, examples of nationalistic ideology in the HB; Mal 1:2-5, however, may not be the best example of such rhetoric.[73]

Thus both Vriezen and Anderson reject that Mal 1:2-5 has a pro-Israel nationalist tendency. Yet, it is difficult to maintain that the passage is an expression of YHWH's love for Israel in contrast to hate for Esau/Edom and, at the same time, deny that it is not biased. It is not clear, therefore, according to these views, how the prophet with a broad view would hold, if he would, to the particularistic view that Mal 1:2-4 represents.

1.3.2. Love as a Prelude to Censure

A smaller number of commentators take a closer look at how the discourse progresses by paying attention to the immediate section starting at v. 6. They maintain that Mal 1:2-5 anticipates the severe criticism leveled against Judah in subsequent sections. According to Boecher, Mal 1:1-5 forms not a positive affirmation but "a statement of the opening of a dialogue."[74]

Like Boecher, Mason holds that Mal 1:2-5 "may not be as comfortable as it has often been understood to be." According to him, Mal 1:2-5 is a warning to Judah that there is a possibility of meeting the same fate as Edom.

> Why does a collection of oracles which so bitterly attack the sins and abuses of Judah begin with a reassuring reminder of their election? May not the main emphasis be on God's freedom to choose and reject? He does not reject arbitrarily. He rejects those who create a domain for wickedness. Then let Judah beware. As freely as he has chosen her in a covenant relationship, just as freely may he reject her.[75]

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[72] T.C. Vriezen, 'How to Understand Malachi 1:11,' J. Cook (ed.), *Grace Upon Grace*, L. J. Kuyper's Festschrift (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 131, quoted in Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 306.
[73] Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 227.
[74] H. J. Boecher 'Bermerkungen zur formsgeschichtlichen Terminologie des Buches Malachi,' *ZAW* 78 (1966) 77-80, quoted in Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 306.
[75] Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 141.

Dahlberg also observes that the sin of the priests, dishonouring YHWH, is the same as Esau's behaviour, which is disregarding God's blessing when he sold his birthright for a meal (cf. Gen 25:32 and Mal 1:6-14, particularly v. 13, where the priests show lack of interest and respect for the cult and YHWH himself.) He thus concludes that Mal 1:2-5 is to be understood as more of a warning to Israel than as an account of Edom's experiences.[76] According to this position, the criticism of Israel's behavior in the rest of the book is introduced by a warning in 1:2-5.

Calvin sees Mal 1:2-6 as a unit in which God expressed his love to Israel in order to convict them of ingratitude, deprive them of any excuse for their impiety and stop them from misusing his unmerited and selective favour towards them. As a reminder of the gratuitous treatment of Israel by YHWH, Mal 1:2-5 introduces a series of refutations of cultic offences in Judah.

> When … God says that he loved the Jews, we see that his object was to convict them of ingratitude for having despised the singular favour bestowed on them alone…the Jews are reminded of God's gratuitous covenant, that they might cease to excuse their wickedness in having misused this singular favour…this singular favour of God towards the children of Jacob is referred to, in order to make them ashamed of their ingratitude, inasmuch as God had set his love on objects so unworthy.[77]

Calvin reads 1:2-6 as a unit and bases his explanation of 1:2-5 on v. 6:

> I am constrained by the context to read all these verses; for the sense cannot be otherwise completed. God expostulates here with a perverse and an ungrateful people, because they doubly deprived him of his right; for he was neither loved nor feared, though he had a just claim to the name and honor of a master as well as that of a father.[78]

Calvin observes that in 1:6-10 YHWH repudiates Israel and welcomes the nations in 1:11.[79] The view that the section is not favourable to Israel is in line with both the immediate and the larger contexts. Calvin's delineation of the passage at 1:6 indicates that there is a closer connection between these passages.

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[76] Dahlberg, 'Studies in the Book of Malachi,' 125-32.
[77] Calvin, *Zechariah and Malachi*, 325, 464, 466.
[78] Ibid., 463.
[79] Ibid., 498-500.

1.3.3. Love as an Inscrutable Divine Act

A vivid expression of the apparent contradiction between the highly positive tone of Mal 1:2-5 and the extremely critical one in the following section comes from Krause. For Krause, the literary context of Malachi suggests that the Jacob/Esau tradition in Mal 1:2-5 should be interpreted as "an inscrutable act of divine election."

> Strikingly, YHWH makes his choice in spite of the reproachable moral conduct of the chosen. In fact, the book of Malachi as a literary unit may be described as a passionate paraenesis calling Jacob-Israel to repentance for wicked transgressions. Esau-Edom, on the other hand, does not even reappear later in the book to elicit YHWH's hatred. The harsh reproach of the people of Israel throughout the book casts a dark shadow over Jacob. And yet they remain his chosen people.[80]

Krause's observations concerning the book of Malachi have to be commended. He clearly spots oddness in the usage of the Esau/Edom tradition in Malachi. There is a contextual unexpectedness in that the "chosen" Israel is harshly criticised throughout Malachi, whereas the hatred for Edom is not justified anywhere in the book. His conclusion that Malachi interprets the Esau/Edom material as an inscrutable divine act is itself indicative of the contradiction. All the issues Krause raises should indicate that Mal 1:2-5 may have to be understood in a different way than has usually been thought.

1.4. Literal Views: A Summary

The above review of various views on Mal 1:2-5 has shown that there are multiple difficulties with interpreting this text. Particularly challenging is how YHWH's disposition towards Esau/Edom as opposed to Jacob/Judah is intended to answer the question that the addressees pose in response to YHWH's initial statement. The review has also shown that many different attempts have been made to come up with an interpretation that accounts for the place of the pericope in the overall context, the rhetorical significance of Edom and the ethical problem its interpretation may entail. Moreover, it became clear that (most of) these interpretations do not fully account for all of these problems or do so partially often explaining one at the expense of the other.

The question בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ is generally perceived as a request for proof of YHWH's love in response to the statement, אָהַבְתִּי אֶתְכֶם. YHWH's consequent response in the

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[80] Krause, 'Tradition, History, and Our Story,' 483-4.

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following verses is thus designed to answer this question of evidence by appealing to the situations of Esau/Edom as opposed to that of Jacob/Judah.[81] The proof-of-love view is based on the assumption that the occasion for Malachi was concerned with a suffering people who doubted whether God did care about them. Other views vary as to what the point of the answer is. Some maintain that Israel is being reminded of YHWH's gratuitous love in order to criticise the people for failing to appreciate it.[82] Others suggest that the answer to the question serves as a warning that Israel might as well be rejected if the people continue in their disobedience.[83]

It is not persuasive, however, how the narrative of Israel's election and Edom's condemnation could be an argument aimed at convincing the people who were likely to be quite aware of the narrative itself.[84] Given that Malachi is referring largely to a past event (unless a future event is stated in prophetic perfect as some claim), the people might have even seen that Esau's demise was no longer an answer to their problems! Moreover, even though the post-exilic view of Edom in Israel means that Israel would be glad to see Edom destroyed, their destruction would only be significant in Malachi if Edom was seen as part, at least, of the concern being addressed. Edom does not re-emerge[85] at all in Malachi and Judah's problems that are expressed or implied in Malachi have rather more to do with internal issues than external threats.[86] YHWH's argument would be fallacious if the intention was to persuade Israel of his love, and has, in fact, been labeled as such by some commentators.[87]

Whether the response to the question is designed to offer an assurance of love or to warn or criticise Israel, according to these views, YHWH's attitude to Esau/Edom remains that of hate and rejection. Jacob/Judah on the other hand is the favourite. Such a stance is difficult to justify.

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[81] However, there are differences regarding the background for the question and its supposed answer. On the other hand, it has been claimed that religious lapses and social injustices are more likely to provide the occasion for the writing.
[82] Calvin, *Zechariah and Malachi*, 463-6; Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, 512-3.
[83] Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 141.
[84] There were already various views concerning Esau/Edom, the most dominant one believed to be extremely negative towards Edom. For more discussion see Cresson, 'The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism,' 125-48.
[85] Krause, 'Tradition, History, and Our Story,' 483-4.
[86] J. D. Nogalsky, *The Book of the Twelve: Micah-Malachi* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2011) 992-3.
[87] Edgar, *The Minor Prophets,* 1962, 99-100: Malachi's answer shows "surprising lack of depth"; Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* 615: "childish" argument aimed at "simple souls".

Scholars have tried to soften the moral difficulty posed by וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי by downplaying the offensiveness of the word שָׂנֵא in various ways. In addition to their own peculiar shortcomings, these interpretations all risk downplaying the significance of the word in the context. Yet, such efforts of explanations indicate that there is something more significant with the use of Esau/Edom tradition in Malachi than meets the eye. Likewise, limiting שָׂנֵא to Esau, while justifying Edom's destruction, only highlights the significance of the problem as it is untenable to make such a distinction between Esau and Edom.

Most of the scholars maintain that the function of Mal 1:2-5 in the context of the whole discourse is to offer hope and encouragement as a motivation for the people to heed the exhortation to attain the expected cultic and moral standard in the face of suffering. Other commentators rightly sense a rather uncomplimentary nuance in the passage that naturally flows into the rest of Malachi's overwhelmingly critical discourse. The implication of these views for explaining the overt criticism of Judah and the positive stance towards the nations in the following sections is paramount.

With regard to the rhetorical value of Esau/Edom in Malachi, the majority of the views cite the enemy-factor in the Edom/Israel saga as the reason for Edom's suitability in assuring Judah of YHWH's enduring love.[88] However, the fact that Israel had other foes, as formidable as Edom might be and even more, diminishes its particular significance. Moreover, Esau/Edom is cited here as a brother but not as enemy. In fact, other views appeal to the brotherhood aspect of the relationship between Israel and Edom as underpinning the rhetorical relevance of Edom in Malachi.[89] They see Edom's rhetorical import in YHWH's attempt to offer a suitable comparison between Israel and its neighbour. However, the holders of this view themselves question the wisdom of seeking evidence for God's love on the basis of a neighbour's worse situation.[90]

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[88] For instance see Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and* Malachi, 167-73.
[89] Calvin, *Zechariah and Malachi*, 463-6; Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, 512-3.
[90] Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 615; Edgar, *The Minor Prophets*, 99-100.

A relatively few scholars point out that the significance of Edom in prophetic uses is to be sought in the attribution of a belief to Israel by the prophets that Edom replaced Israel as YHWH's chosen people. As diverse as they are, all these latter views have one common feature: they highlight the peculiarity of the depiction of Edom in Malachi and thus the need for an explanation that reasonably accounts for such a depiction.

All in all, the insistence on viewing the passage as an expression of an assurance of love for Israel essentially limits the liberty of testing various possibilities as to the role of Edom's text in Malachi. In addition, in light of such a view of the passage, the rhetorical import of the statement involving Esau-Edom seems to be essentially in tension with the question of justice it entails. This is seen in the fact that efforts made to address the latter have the effect of diminishing the value of the former and vice versa. Perhaps most importantly, the view has hampered the need to reassess the place of the pericope in the context of the discourse.

A different implication can be argued for in which the response to the question is intended not to assert but to echo the claim that YHWH loves Israel but hates Esau/Edom: the speaker attributes the pro-Israel and anti-Edom rhetoric to the people of Judah in order to attack their sense of acceptability to YHWH. This is suggested by the discourse context, particularly, Mal 1:6-14. This path of interpretation will be pursued in III.3 following a review of Blake's ironic reading of Mal 1:1-5 in the following section (III.2).

2. Blake's Proposal

The only existing non-literal interpretation of Mal 1:2-5 comes from Richard D. Blake who proposes to read the passage as irony. In his dissertation (unpublished), Blake argues that the passage is ironic according to the traditional definition of the term: "We sense that a tension develops in this initial paragraph that verges on irony and even sarcasm."[91] Blake notes that the passage is a reuse of existing tradition: "vv 2d-3a speak the commonly accepted, Israelite-audience conclusion that YHWH loves Jacob."[92] He maintains that Mal 1:1 connects the passage to Exodus 23:32-33 (cf.

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[91] Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 116.
[92] Ibid.

מַלְאָכִי which is present in both texts). Similarly, the question 1:2b is related to Exodus 33:3-4 and the term "love" in 1:2 to Deuteronomy (such as 4:37; 7:13; 23:5).[93]

Blake cites evidences internal to Mal 1:1-5 for his argument. According to him, the "text itself alerts us to an uncommon reading of Mal."[94] First, he observes that love to Israel (1:2a, d) was never stated in first person in the HB. Second, he holds that Esau in 1:3a is syntactically prominent and asserts that this is unusual as is the singular use of נְאֻם and כֹּה אָמַר; he maintains that "vv 2d-3a seem dislodged by נְאֻם־יְהוָה and are awkwardly separated from 1.2b" and that such a "sequence gives the final phrase the diminished impact of an after-thought."[95] Third, he opts to translate מֵעַל לִגְבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל in v. 5 as "beyond the border of Israel" and suggests that it runs against the expectation that YHWH is glorified in Israel and this means something significant to understanding the passage ironically.[96]

Blake also notes that the whole context of Malachi suggests that the passage is ironic. He observes, for instance, that contextually 1:6-11 contradicts 1:1b-5 in both content and structure.[97] Blake maintains that, in view of the overall context of Malachi, the Esau/Edom tradition is used in 1:2-5 in an unusual way:

> Here it denotes the flip-side of an idea, the converse of the conventional belief that love for Jacob equals hatred of Edom. The statement is voiced by YHWH purportedly, but N [narrator] reports this speech in an unusually atypical context, despite its prophetic conventions of form and its traditional expectations. Within the framework of Mal as a whole...this type of...speech often over-emphasises predictable ideas in order to become ironic.[98]

Regarding the ethical issue, Blake sees the text as deliberately exaggerating the convention that Esau/Edom is hated and that Israel is loved.[99]

Blake's observation is remarkable. His remark that the passage is an atypical reuse of existing tradition is particularly commendable. Moreover, his claims account for the

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 116, 117.
[96] Ibid., 127-8
[97] Ibid., 130-1.
[98] Ibid., 116-7.
[99] Ibid., 127-8.

contextual and ethical issues as well as the significance of Edom in the pericope better than the literal readings. This shows that an ironic reading is more plausible than the literal ones.

However, this thesis and Blake's proposal differ with regard to the basic points of argumentation. First, whereas Blake believes that the text vindicates Esau/Edom, this thesis does not argue that the ironic use of the Esau/Edom tradition means that the passage necessarily advocates the innocence of Edom. It is simply a means of criticising Israel for a naïve view of their acceptability to YHWH in the face of their trespasses.

Second, whereas Blake includes Mal 1:1 in his reading, this thesis does not. Blake translates vv. 1b-2a as "By my מַלְאָךְ I have loved you." [100] However, this rendering is unclear and may not be necessary. According to Weyde, it is difficult to see how this translation relates to the rest of the pericope. [101] Blake also renders מֵעַל in v. 5 as "beyond", maintaining that YHWH is honoured outside of Israel as opposed to *in* Israel. [102] However, an ironic reading of this rendering does not agree with an ironic reading of YHWH's love for Israel (1:2a, d).

Third, Blake uses the traditional definition of irony which describes irony in terms of propositions that are different (usually opposite) from what it expressed (II.2.1). This thesis, on the other hand, applies the RT notion of irony, which regards verbal irony as attitudinal rather than propositional (II.2.2.2). In the following section, Mal 1:2-5 will be analysed as irony according to the RT definition of the term.

3. Ironic Reading of Malachi 1:2-5

It will be the claim of the remaining sections of this chapter that the passage in Mal 1:2-5 is better understood as ironic. YHWH's utterances, embedded under the utterances of the prophet, are interpretations of other representations (see II.1.3.4, 2.2).

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[100] Ibid., 116.
[101] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 57.
[102] However, מֵעַל can also mean "over" in which case the verse means that YHWH is honoured in Israel as opposed to *outside* Israel. It should be noted that even if מֵעַל is rendered "beyond" it does not in itself necessarily mean that YHWH is not honoured in Israel. It could simply mean that he is worshiped beyond the confines of the territory of Israel, that is, Judah.

There are multiple layers of attributive metarepresentation. First, the prophet quotes YHWH. This layer of attribution is indicated by the speech introducer, אָמַר יְהוָה (v. 2a), נְאֻם־יְהוָה (v. 2c), כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (v. 4b). Second, YHWH's utterances embed the thoughts of Israel (the people and priests of Judah). This layer of attribution is not marked linguistically, but as it will be argued later (III.3.2), YHWH's words represent what the people and the priests think. Third, YHWH's utterances echo the thoughts that he attributes to Israel. This level of metarepresentation is different from a direct quote in that the utterances are used for a purpose that is different from the one the people would use them for. YHWH uses these utterances to express a dissociative attitude to the thoughts they represent (the last two layers will be discussed in detail in III.3.1 below).

All the three layers of metarepresentation can be expressed as follows:
Malachi says,
    YHWH says,
        Israel thinks that p, where p is:
1. YHWH loves Israel (1:2)
2. YHWH hates and will destroy Edom (1:3-4)
3. Israel will glorify YHWH for what he will do to Edom (1:5).
        YHWH distances himself from p.

Put differently, YHWH's utterances are echoes of thoughts attributed to Israel from which both YHWH and the prophet distance themselves. In short, through Malachi, YHWH echoes what the people of Judah say or believe and dissociates from those words or beliefs.

The echoic nature of the passage can be recovered from the following section, Mal 1:6-14, where it is made explicit that the priests thought that they glorify YHWH (1:6-8a) and that they are acceptable to him. In this passage, YHWH confronts such thoughts of the priesthood. First, he criticises their thoughts that they honoured him as father and master. He states that the priests rather dishonoured him (1:6). He questions their thoughts that the status of the offerings they brought to the temple was acceptable.

Using a mixture of questions and ironies, he strongly refutes their assumption that there is no problem with the standard of their offerings (1:7-9).

Second, he denies that he accepts them, calling instead for a cessation of the cultic practice (1:10). Finally, he endorses worship by the nations (1:11). The statement of endorsement serves as a corrective clause to the assumption regarding Judah's acceptability that is denied in 1:10b. It can also be taken as a contrast to the alleged rejection of Edom in 1:3-4.

In this section, I will, first, analyze the passage (1:2-5) in terms of the three features of irony (see II.2), namely, attribution, echo and dissociation (3.1). I will then demonstrate how such a reading is supported by the larger discourse context, i.e., 1:6-14. I will start by showing how the passage under consideration can be understood as part of the larger discourse. This will be followed by a detailed analysis of Mal 1:6-14. I will conclude the sub-section with a comment showing how the discourse context strongly implies an ironic reading of Mal 1:2-5 (3.2). Third, I will discuss how the other issues, namely the ethical problem and the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition, will acquire more relevance in an ironic reading of the passage. Specifically, I will show that the ironic reading not only explains the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition and the related ethical question but actually enhances their importance (3.3). Finally, a summary of my proposed reading will be given (3.4) before concluding the chapter (4).

3.1. Analyzing Mal 1:2-5 as Irony

The passage in Mal 1:2-5 is a diatribe in which the prophet represents various voices, including YHWH, YHWH's addressees (the people of Israel)[103] and himself. The diatribe can be divided into three sub-units, namely YHWH's love for Israel (v. 2), YHWH's hate for Esau and his judgment of Edom (vv. 3-4), and Israel's response to some of the events related to the judgment on Edom (v. 5).[104] A dialogue is initiated by YHWH's statement, "I love you" (v. 2a), to which the addressees respond in question,

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[103] According to the superscript (v. 1) the audience is the people of Israel.

[104] A stretch of utterances (a paragraph, for instance) can be ironical. Literature in this area seem to assume a single sentence/clause when irony is discussed but see Swift, 'A Modest Proposal,' 226-35, which is an extended discourse widely recognised as irony. See also II, 2.2.2, example (29). See also Kanonge who analyzes thematic irony in the story of Susanna: D. M. Kanonge, 'Thematic Irony in the Story of Susanna,' *HTS* 69.1 (2013) 1-6.

"how do you love us?" (2b). The rest of the diatribe (vv. 2c-5) is mainly about YHWH's response to the question from the addressee: YHWH says that he loves Jacob, but hates Esau and will eventually annihilate the Edomites as a result of which Israel would acknowledge his greatness (vv. 2c-5). YHWH's utterances as reported by the prophet are as follows:

(1)   "I love you; I love Jacob" (v. 2a, c)[105]

(2)   I hate Esau;[106] I have made his mountains desolation and appointed his inheritance to the desert jackals (v. 3).[107]

(3)   "They (the Edomites) may build, but I will tear down. They will call them 'the wicked territory, a people with whom YHWH is indignant forever'" (v. 4b-c).[108]

(4)   "You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great[109] is YHWH over the borders of Israel!'"[110]

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[105] The qal perfective form אָהַבְתִּי can be construed as representing a durative emotional state and thus rendered, with its object אֶתְכֶם, as "I love you." B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 493, 30.5.3c. The second occurrence of אהב in וָאֹהַב אֶת־יַעֲקֹב can also be rendered similarly; see, for instance, REB.

[106] The qal perfective form of שנא in וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי (3a) can be rendered as durative. Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 493, 30.5.3c. See also REB.

[107] The waw consecutive, qal verb שים (אָשִׂים) 'to put, place, set, appoint, make' functions as perfective following the perfective שָׂנֵאתִי in 3a and thus can be rendered as 'I have put, placed, set, appointed, made.' Waltke and O'Conner, 556, 33.3.1c; F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, *BDB* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005 [9th ed.]) 962d. The verb is used to describe a wide range of phenomena with regard to placing or displacing an object in space and time, literally or metaphorically: S. Meier, 'שים,' W. A. VanGemeren (ed.) *NIDOTTE*, 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997) 1237-40. Here in Mal 1:3b, it governs two sets of double accusatives forming parallel statements, one accusative in each set being the recipient of the action and the other its result. In such a sentence where the action represented by the verb makes X into Y, its meaning is that of transformation: Ibid., 1239. It particularly refers to "a transformation of quality" with regard to הָרָיו 'his (Esau) mountains' and נַחֲלָתוֹ 'his inheritance'. Esau's mountains and inheritance both stand for the land of the Edomites. YHWH says that he has transformed Esau's land into a barren and inhospitable place.

[108] רִשְׁעָה "wickedness." *BDB* lists three areas of wickedness, wickedness in "civil relations", "ethical and religious" wickedness and "wickedness of enemies." It categorises רִשְׁעָה here as wickedness of enemy and the other two occurrences in Malachi (3:15, 19) as ethical and religious wickedness (*BDB*, 958a.) However, there is no mentioning of any guilt and the labelling of Edom as wicked follows YHWH's resolve to keep them desolate. Therefore, it can be said that the description "wicked" is an evaluation of their desolate situation by the speakers. The idea is that the inability to rebuild their ruined nation as a result of YHWH's firm opposition that would frustrate their efforts would send a message that Edom must be a wicked nation rejected and punished by God.

[109] The qal imperfect form of גדל "to grow up, become great" (*BDB*, 152b) is rendered either as volitional (May YHWH be magnified) as imperfect (YHWH is great) or future (YHWH will be great). In the context, the verb is better understood as imperfect: in contrast to the territory of Edom where YHWH is allegedly indignant, he is great in the territory of Israel. This rendering suggests that יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל לִגְבוּל is to be understood as "upon, over the border (territory) of Israel" (*BDB*, 759b). This is contra Blake who opts to translate מֵעַל לִגְבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל in v. 5 as "beyond the border of Israel" and

I argue that YHWH's utterances in (1) – (4) are used ironically. That is, they are attributive, echoic and dissociative. They are more relevant, not as descriptions of a reality, but as echoing thoughts attributed to the people and priests of Judah in order to communicate a dissociative attitude toward those thoughts.

3.1.1. Attribution

YHWH's utterances in (1) – (4) above are interpretations of other representations. Particularly, they are metarepresentations of thoughts attributed to the people and priests of Judah. YHWH's utterances resemble the thoughts of the people and the priests in meaning properties.[111] Thus it can be said, for instance, that the Judahite community thought that:

(5)   YHWH had a favourable attitude towards them.[112]

(6)   YHWH loathed the Edomites.

(7)   YHWH was well-honoured in Israel as opposed to in Edom, a wicked nation he is angry with.[113]

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suggests that it runs against the expectation that YHWH is glorified in Israel: Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 127-8.

[110] Whether v. 5 is YHWH's utterance is disputed. Versions such as NIV consider it to be YHWH's. Others, such as RSV, assign it to the prophet.

[111] There need not be linguistic identity in attribution. As it is discussed in II.1.3.4, 2.2.1, the relationship between attributed utterances and their original sources is determined by resemblance, which ranges from linguistic identity to meaning property.

[112] If the people believed that YHWH loved them, why did they ask בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ? It must be surprising for them to hear YHWH saying that because, even though that is exactly what they thought should be the case, they did not feel that they were actually experiencing the favour they expected. They took his love and favour for granted and must have felt disappointed when they did not see it work out as they wished. According to the prophet, Israel's problem is that they dishonoured and disobeyed YHWH and are in lack of his favour. Assumptions that the people are well with YHWH are nothing but self-deception (1:6-14). To have YHWH's favour, they must stop dishonouring him (2:2a, 16; 3:7b, 10-12). Blake maintains that "vv 2d-3a speak the commonly accepted, Israelite-audience conclusion that YHWH loves Jacob." Blake, The Rhetoric of Malachi, 116-7.

[113] How does v. 5 relate to its context: does the expression יִגְדַּל יְהוָה מֵעַל לִגְבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל relate to "I love you" in 1:2 so as to serve as Israel's acknowledgment of YHWH's love and mean, "I can see your love, YHWH!" Or is it a response to YHWH's judgment of Edom?: YHWH is great in Israel or beyond! It could be that everything from 2c-4 is in view. There seems to be, however, a stronger connection with 1:4c for several reasons. First, both verses employ similar and contrasting expressions such as: גְּבוּל רִשְׁעָה / גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל ; קָרְאוּ / תֹּאמְרוּ. Second, they have represent but YHWH's contrastive dispositions: YHWH's dealings with two people in which he utterly rejects one and upholds the other. In fact, 1:5 is an antithesis of 1:4c: whereas Edom is a wicked territory whose people are condemned and rejected forever by YHWH, Israel will have YHWH reign in glory over its territory.

The Israelites believed that their enemies were essentially enemies of YHWH: J. A. Thompson, 'Israel's Haters,' *VT* 29 (1979) 200-5. Thompson affirms, "In the political area Yahweh was seen as being involved with Israel in her political relationships, generally in the sense that Israel's enemies were Yahweh's enemies." Similarly, Dicou, states Haller's observation that "Edom is, more than other nations,

The original thought that YHWH's utterances metarepresent may even be more general: the relationship between YHWH and Judah as opposed to his relationship with Edom. For instance, utterance (1) may metarepresent assumptions that YHWH is pleased with the religious life of the people and the priests of Judah. Similarly, utterance (4) can be a metarepresentation of a belief that YHWH is well revered in Israel. Utterance (2) and (3) can be construed as metarepresenting the well-known Esau/Edom tradition. In fact, all the utterances in (1) – (4) can be taken as an attributive use of such tradition.

The Esau/Edom tradition includes thoughts that YHWH's utterances (1) – (4) metarepresent, namely, how YHWH relates to Israel and Edom. YHWH accepts Israel and rejects Edom and Edom is wicked and Israel glorifies YHWH. In other words, utterances (1) – (4) resemble the Esau/Edom tradition in that they both involve YHWH's contrastive stances to Israel and Edom. It is, therefore, reasonable to posit that the popular Esau/Edom tradition is the source of echo for Mal 1:2-5 in general and for YHWH's utterances in particular.

The existence in Judah of opposing views regarding Edom, concurrently or at different times, has been discussed above as forming the basis for the existence of contrastive attitudes (favourable and unfavourable) toward Edom in the HB. It has been discussed, likewise, that previous sources could give rise to the present form of the Esau/Edom tradition in which, first, divergent views were promoted and, second, one or more of the shared motifs of Edom's annihilation, Israel's restoration and the destruction of the nations are entertained (see III, 1.1.1).

The author of Mal 1:2-5 could use one or more of the views and/or sources that are critical of Edom. The various sources that are potentially echoed in this passage can be categorised as follows:-

1. Anti-Edom views, attitudes, beliefs or sentiments that could exist alongside the positive appreciation of Edom. If this is the case there could also be a situation in which competing groups vying for power existed, though not necessarily. There are,

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the object of hate." Haller, 'Edom im Urteil der Propheten,' 109-17 as quoted in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 13.

in fact, studies that posit the existence of rivalry between different offices and groups in post-exilic Judaism.[114]

2. Anti Edom views, attitudes, beliefs or sentiments that developed later in response to the perceived roles of the Edomites in the plight of Judah in 587 BCE.

3. Oral traditions critical of Edom inasmuch as these were manifest to the audience.

4. Cult lamentations that might have helped inspire the production of the anti-Edom oracles. The motifs of the obliteration of Edom and Israel's restoration (as opposed to the abolition of Edom) could easily be targeted by a voice as critical of Judah itself as Malachi's.

It might be naïve to attempt to single out a particular view/source as being echoed here, but it can be said with some confidence that the utterances in this passage are echoes of the negative stance against Edom that is evident in other prophetic oracles.

3.1.2. Echoic

YHWH's utterances (1) – (4) are used echoically, i.e., they are employed in order to express speaker's attitude towards the thought they metarepresent. That is, they are not intended simply to assert a state of YHWH's stance toward Israel or Edom. Rather, they are echoed in order to express YHWH's attitude towards assumptions they metarepresent, i.e., assumptions held by the people and priests of Judah regarding YHWH's relationship with Israel and Edom. These assumptions are thoughts such as (5) – (7) or, more generally, the popularly held "Esau/Edom tradition" that is critical of Edom.

3.1.3. Dissociative

The speaker (YHWH) dissociates from his utterances (1) – (4). Thus he ridicules the assumptions that the utterances represent. Assumptions held by the people and priests of Judah, such as (5) – (7) or the anti-Edom rhetoric of the Esau/Edom tradition are echoed and rejected.

The people and the priests of Judah were ignorant to think that that their relationship with YHWH was good; they were naïve to think that YHWH would accept them, that

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[114] Reynolds, 'Malachi and the Priesthood.' Reynolds is of the opinion that Malachi is challenging rival Aaronide priests.

he is pleased with them. They were ignorant that YHWH despised other nations and would only be revered and worshipped in the confines of Israel's boundaries. The people and priests of Judah were ignorant that they were actually dishonouring YHWH.

It is not new for the prophets of the Old Testament to ascribe to Israel assumptions that mere outward worship practices and cultic structures would please YHWH and ensure his agreement (Jer 7:1-11; Amos 5:21-24). Such a false assumption is exactly what the following section, Mal 1:6-14, is all about: the priesthood as well as the people thought that YHWH is pleased with them and accepts their worship regardless of their behaviour. This will be discussed in the following sub-section but before that a summary of this sub-section will be given.

3.1.4. Summary

It has been argued, in this sub-section, that YHWH's utterances in Mal 1:2-5 are ironic: they are attributive, echoic and dissociative. They are attributed to the people and priests of Judah. The people and priests of Judah entertained assumptions that YHWH is favourable towards Israel and that he abhors Edom. These assumptions are contained in the Esau/Edom tradition in the HB. YHWH echoes these assumptions of the people and priests of Judah and expresses his attitude towards those assumptions. The attitude expressed towards the assumptions is dissociative. YHWH distances himself from his utterances and the assumptions that they represent thereby mocking the assumptions as naïve.

The ironic reading of Mal 1:2-5 is supported by the larger context to which the former belong. In the following section, Mal 1:6-14, YHWH clearly rejects the assumptions of the priesthood that they honour him and that he accepts and is pleased with them. He also endorses worship by the nations as pure and acknowledges that his name is honoured among other people suggesting that the rejection of Edom in 1:3-4 is not genuine. This contextual evidence will be explored in the next section.

3.2. The Question of Context: Reading Mal 1:2-5 in the Discourse Context of Mal 1:2-14

In this sub-section, I will locate Mal 1:2-5 in the larger discourse context of Mal 1:2-14 in which most of YHWH's utterances are understood as echoing (quoting) and rejecting the assumptions of the priesthood and/or the Judahite community at large. I will show this in three stages: First, I will point out linking parallels in 1:2-5 and 1:6-14 that highlight a continuity of thought. Second, I will explain how the discourse progresses: using RT, I will draw attention to a series of connected echoic utterances in 1:6-14. Finally, I will identify 1:2-5 as a set of echoic utterances that provides the starting point for the larger discourse.

3.2.1. Linking Parallels between Mal 1:2-5 and 6-14

Based on the general consensus that Malachi is composed of independent groups of disputations, scholars tend to treat each of these groups more or less exclusively of others and Mal 1:2-5 is no exception (see I. 2.4).[115] However, a closer look at the discourse context suggests that there is a stronger link between Mal 1:2-5 and 1:6-14 than scholars have generally thought. There is a thematic and structural relationship as well as linguistic similarities that strongly suggest continuity.

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[115] See for instance, Y. T. Radday and M. A. Pollatschek, 'Vocabulary Richness in Post-Exilic Prophetic Books.' *ZAW* 92 (1980) 333-46, citing 333: "disconnected oracles dealing with widely varying issues." Outlines of Malachi are notoriously varied; for an extensive list of earlier proposals, see Bulmerincq, *Der Prophet Maleachi* I, 69-72. All but von Orelli, (Bulmerincq, *Der Prophet Maleachi* I, 71) treat 1:2-5 as independent unit. Evidently, Orelli himself sees 1:2-5 as favourable to the addressees, however, despite grouping it, under subtitle "Complaint of Neglect of the Lord", together with 1:6-14 which is severely critical of the cultic community; see, C. von Orelli, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, (tr. J. S. Banks Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1893) 390. The pattern is similar throughout with the isolated reading of 1:2-5 still persisting. There had been similar observations of a closer connection than perceived by the majority of the commentators, albeit with the same view that 1:2-5 is an approving move. For instance, according to Calvin, the first unit of dialogue in Malachi does not end at 1:5 but extends to 1:6: Calvin, *Zechariah and Malachi*, 463. He claims that he is "constrained by the context to read all these verses." On another note, while marking it off 1:2-5, Sellin considers 1:6-14 as an independent unit displaying Die Anklage and thus distinct from 2:1-9, which consists of Strafankündigung; E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch übersetzt und erklärt*, KAT, band XII, Zweite Hälfte (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1930) 547, though later objected to by Pfeiffer ('Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi,' 559-60) who contends that the sections have to be read together. There is a clear connection between the sections but Sellin's demarcation is not without justification: there is a clear distinction between the passages in that 1:6-14 is concerned with recriminations concluded by the triumph of YHWH's case which is then followed by YHWH's decision (i.e. pronouncement of judgment and threats of Judgment) in 2:1-9; the guilty are convicted and then sentenced.

3.2.1.1. Common Motif and Addressee

One of the linking parallels shared by Mal 1:2-5 and 1:6-14 is the theme of familial relationship. The reference to YHWH as "father" and Judah/priesthood as "son" in 1:6 reflects the "father-son" relationship between YHWH and the addressees that is already implied in the reference to Esau-Jacob brotherhood in 1:2. The idea of brotherhood there entails the notion of YHWH's fatherhood as he relates to them albeit with different dispositions.[116] The conditional clause וְאִם־אָב אָנִי in 1:6 presupposes that YHWH is the father of the addressees. The addressees in 1:6 could infer the fact of YHWH's fatherhood from a shared set of assumptions but it should be noted that they could also infer it from the statement about the brotherhood of Jacob and Esau in 1:2. In fact, it is more likely that this more immediate context in which the assumption is made manifest is chosen because it is more accessible. Therefore, YHWH's fatherhood in 1:6 can be understood as linked to the Jacob-Esau brotherhood in 1:2.

The addressees in 1:2 are unspecified; they are referred to by the second masculine plural object suffix, אֶתְכֶם. The audience in 1:6 is specifically named as הַכֹּהֲנִים. If the father-son relationship in 1:2 is assumed in the conditional clause וְאִם־אָב אָנִי in 1:6, it follows that the audience in 1:2 includes the priesthood. This may suggest that the general audience in 1:2 is particularised in 1:6. The נוֹכֵל 'deceiver' in 1:14 is not particularly identified as an addressee but is obviously part of those being denounced for dishonouring YHWH. This varied reference to the addressees shows that it is difficult to assign the passage a particular audience.

However, the priesthood stands out as the main addressee and it is quite possible that this group is the one with whom YHWH starts the dialogue in 1:2. Such identification of the priesthood as the primary addressee is in line with their role as leaders and representatives of the people. While the community is still responsible for honouring YHWH, the priests carry a special responsibility to insure that the cultic requirements are observed and that YHWH's name is honoured.

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[116] See O'Brien ('Judah as Wife and Husband,' 242) who treats 1:2-3, together with 1:6, as a showcase of paternal abuse.

3.2.1.2. Contrasting Israel with a Non-Israelite Party

The presence of an outsider as a rival of some sort pertaining to the relationship between YHWH and Jacob/Israel provides another linking parallel between 1:2-5 and 1:6-14. In 1:2-3a, it is stated that YHWH loves "you"/Jacob but hates Esau/Edom. Here in contrast, YHWH is not pleased with Israel's priesthood nor will he accept offerings from them (1:6-10). Rather, he will be honoured and worshipped among the nations (Edom as representative of nations?) (1:11-14). Likewise, in 1:3b-4, YHWH curses Edom with persistent futility, but in 1:14 it is Israel who is cursed (see also 2:1-3).[117]

Finally, Israel would glorify YHWH in 1:5 saying that "YHWH will be great מֵעַל Israel (1:5) but that is soon reversed in 1:6-14 as Israel is accused of dishonouring his name whereas the nations will revere it. Specifically, in 1:6, YHWH asks וְאִם־אֲדוֹנִים אָנִי אַיֵּה מוֹרָאִי "If I am a master, where is the fear due me?" In 1:11f he asserts, (גָּדוֹל שְׁמִי בַּגּוֹיִם...וְאַתֶּם מְחַלְּלִים אוֹתוֹ) "My name will be great among the nations...but you defile it."

3.2.1.3. Terms Expressing YHWH's Disposition and Judgment: Love/Acceptance vs Hate/Rejection and Curse

The verb אהב in 1:2 has its corresponding equivalents חנן, חֵפֶץ and רצה in 1:8-10. The idiomatic expression נשׂא פָּנִים in vv. 8-9 which is an equivalent of חנן could also be regarded as related to אהב.[118] These various expressions represent particular aspects of אהב. According to Wallis, "...parallel expressions or ideas in Hebrew help us in determining the various corresponding gradations of meaning of ʾāhaḇ." Wallis calls these parallels "interpretative parallels" and includes in his list חֵפֶץ (Ps. 34:13[12]), רצה (Prov 16:13f), כבד (Isa 43:4, Ps 87:2), noting that "he who loves... is occupied

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[117] In yet another set of contrasts, Edom would be subjected to humiliation as וְקָרְאוּ לָהֶם גְּבוּל רִשְׁעָה וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר־זָעַם יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם (1:4c) but this would be reversed in 2:9 where the priests of Israel are told that וְגַם־אֲנִי נָתַתִּי אֶתְכֶם נִבְזִים וּשְׁפָלִים לְכָל־הָעָם.

[118] H. -J. Fabry, 'חנן,' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *TDOT*, 5 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986) 22-36, citing 23.

with affectionate desire" (חֵפֶץ, רצה) and "the one chosen is…honored" (כבד).[119]
Similarly, Cranfield observes that

> Other roots connected in meaning, though never represented by love, are *chaphets* (delight, etc.) and *ratsah* (accept, be pleased, etc.), which are probably technical terms of the language of sacrifice and of princely court; and, more important theologically, *chanan*, signifying the condescension of the rich to the poor.[120]

The noun חֵפֶץ and the verb רצה are particularly used to reject the assumptions of the priesthood in 1:10. The noun חֵפֶץ ("delight"; "desire, longing")[121] is synonymous with אהב as can be seen from the occurrence of its verbal form (חָפֵץ) with the former:

> Finally, in 1 K. 10:9 par. 2 Ch. 9:8 ḥāp̄ēṣ stands in parallel with ʾāhaḇ; the queen of Sheba praises Solomon's God, who was pleased to set Solomon upon the throne of Israel (ḥāp̄ēṣ YHWH lᵉtittᵉka); because he loved (bᵉʾahabat) Israel, in order to establish it, he made Solomon king to execute justice and righteousness. Thus ḥāp̄ēṣ, "to be pleased," "to be inclined toward," also has the connotation of ʾāhaḇ, "love." When referring to God, ḥāp̄ēṣ stands in conjunction with ʾāhaḇ (1 K. 10:9 par. 2 Ch. 9:8).[122]

The term is also used in "the realm of friendship" occurring together with אהב (1 Sam 18:22 - Saul and David; 19:1; 20:17 Jonathan and David). Likewise "in the sexual realm of love between man and woman ḥāp̄ēṣ can mean simply "delight in," but it can also designate a specific degree of affection in the hierarchy of terms defining such relationships."[123]

Barstad lists אהב 'to love' as one of the synonyms for רצה ("be pleased with, find good or pleasant, love, like". It appears in synonymous parallelism with חפץ in Ps.

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[119] G. Wallis. 'אהב,' in G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (eds.), *TDOT*, 1 (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1974/1977) 99-118, citing 102-3.

[120] C. E. B. Cranfield, 'Love, Lover, Lovely, Beloved, and (in AV of NT) Charity,' in A. Richardson (ed.) *A Theological Word Book of the Bible'* (London: SCM, 1950) 131-6, citing 13; Cranfield may be considered a semipopular work; nonetheless his observation is valid and corroborated by other standard works, such as Wallis, 'אהב,' 102-3 and Fabry, 'חנן,' 23 as shown above.

[121] *BDB*, 343b.

[122] G. J. Botterweck, 'חָפֵץ; חֵפֶץ,' in G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (eds.), *TDOT*, 5 (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1986) 92-106, citing 105.

[123] Botterweck, 'חָפֵץ'; חֵפֶץ,' 94-5.

לֹא־בִשְׁוֹקֵי הָאִישׁ יִרְצֶה; לֹא בִגְבוּרַת הַסּוּס יֶחְפָּץ 147:10-11 .[124] Barstad also observes that as well as a general term expressing the relationship between humanity and deity, רצה is a specialised terminology of cult.

> In OT usage rāṣāh is not only a central theological term expressing fundamental relationships between God and human beings, but also a technical term of the sacrificial cult. On Yahweh's favourable acceptance of the sacrifice depends the fate of Israel and those who worship Yahweh.[125]

The negation of both רצה and חפץ means that YHWH rejects that he is positively disposed towards Israel. The verb שׂנא in 1:3 has its correlates in these negated expressions. Weyde's observation confirms this:

> Other verbs or expressions occur rather frequently together with it and thus help to fix its meaning. For instance, in the prophetic criticism of cultic obligations which are carried out while justice and righteousness are neglected, שׂנא is paralleled by such phrases as "not accept" לֹא רצה, "not delight in" לֹא חפץ, "despise" מאס and "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה all referring to YHWH's rejection of blameworthy instructions or acts in the cult.[126]

It is striking that, as Barstad observes, these terms, including their synonyms, are frequently used in discourses with cultic concerns. This fact shows that אהב and שׂנא are also used in Mal 1:2-5 in their cultic sense.

3.2.1.4. Structural Considerations: Chiasm

There is a clearly observable parallelism in the organization of materials in 1:2-11 with 1:6-11 as an inversion of 1:2-5 both in structure and content.[127] It is interesting to note that the idea of YHWH's glory, the prominent theme of Malachi, is at the centre of the chiasmus:

1:2 YHWH *loves* Israel
    1:3-4 YHWH rejects Edom
        1:5 Israel glorifies YHWH

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[124] H. M. Barstad, 'רָצָה'; 'רָצוֹן,' in G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren and H.-J Fabry (eds.), *TDOT*, 13 (Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2004) 618-30, citing 619, 621.

[125] Barstad, 'רָצָה'; 'רָצוֹן,' 621-2.

[126] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 8.

[127] Blake notes that contextually 1:6-11 contradicts 1:1b-5 in both content and structure: Blake 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 130-1.

> 1:6-7 Israel dishonours YHWH
> 1:8-10 YHWH rejects Israel
> 1:11-14 YHWH *accepts* the nations

The passage in Mal 1:2-5 is well linked with the subsequent section, 1:6-14, both structurally and in content. They have the same familial motif and addressee. Both deal with cultic acceptability and also contrast Israel with outsiders (rivals). Also, they have similar information organization. However, as discussed above, they contrast in the way they treat these shared elements, i.e., the roles and fortunes of the elements are inverted in 1:6-14.

Thus the relationship between the two sections means that any interpretation of Mal 1:2-5 has to take the message of Mal 1:6-14 into consideration. With this in mind, I will now look at Mal 1:6-14 (3.2.2). Specifically, I will argue that Mal 1:6-14 is concerned with YHWH's response to assumptions held by the priesthood regarding the status of their relationship with him. The passage is a progression of echoic utterances communicating an attitude of rejection towards the thoughts of the priesthood that YHWH is pleased with them. If Mal 1:6-14 is analyzed as YHWH's rejection of the assumptions of the priesthood, the seemingly pro-Israel tone of Mal 1:2-5 needs to be questioned. The full implication of this observation for understanding 1:2-5 will be discussed in subsequent section (3.2.3).

3.2.2. Examining the Discourse Context: The Rejection of Assumptions Regarding YHWH's Disposition toward Israel in Mal 1:6-14

The text in Mal 1:6-14 is an echoic discourse in that YHWH echoes assumptions he attributes to the priesthood and rejects them. The text employs three types of echoes, namely, echo questions, irony and denial (see II.4, II.2, II.3, respectively). In 1:6-8a, YHWH echoes and questions the assumptions of the priesthood that they honoured him. The last part of this section (v. 8a) may also be understood as ironic. The next paragraph (vv. 8b- 9) consists of two ironical statements sarcastically inviting the priesthood to present their sort of gifts to a governor or even to God to see if they would be accepted. Finally, in 1:10-11, YHWH is presented as conspicuously dismissing the all too optimistic assumption of the priesthood, rather denying that they are accepted. On the contrary, he asserts that he is revered by proper worship among the nations.

3.2.2.1. Priests' Assumptions Questioned (1:6-8a)

There are a total of six questions in this section if the two utterances in 8a are deemed as such. Some of these questions are posed by YHWH and others by the priests. Whereas YHWH's questions expose and attack assumptions by the priests, questions from the priests protest such attacks by YHWH. Most of them can be construed as echo questions, i.e. they respond to previous utterances or unexpressed assumptions in order to challenge their truthfulness or validity (see II.4.4).

First, YHWH rejects (questions) the assumptions of the priesthood that they sincerely regard him with honour as a father or master (1:6a-d).

Citing a mutually acceptable principle regarding familial (father-son/master-servant) relationship as a premise, YHWH questions the sincerity of the belief/claim by the priests that he is their father and master.[128]

6a בֵּן יְכַבֵּד אָב וְעֶבֶד אֲדֹנָיו
b וְאִם־אָב אָנִי אַיֵּה כְבוֹדִי
c וְאִם־אֲדוֹנִים אָנִי אַיֵּה מוֹרָאִי
d אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לָכֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים בּוֹזֵי שְׁמִי

Two points need to be clarified here. One is whether the priests indeed claim or believe that YHWH is their father and master and the other whether YHWH attributes the claim or belief to them. This can be done by taking a closer look at YHWH's questions.

Each question consists of a conditional clause, and an interrogative. I argue that the conditional clauses presuppose that there is a claim or assumption that YHWH is a father and a master whereas the interrogatives attribute and echo those claims/assumptions to the priesthood and reject them.

According to RT, conditional antecedents (protases) can be a representation of prior thoughts or utterances.[129] The two conditional clauses in 1:6b-c וְאִם־אָב אָנִי /

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[128] The premise בֵּן יְכַבֵּד אָב וְעֶבֶד אֲדֹנָיו is a mutual assumption that is shared by all parties in the dialogue. The assumption is part of their knowledge of the world.

וְאִם־אֲדוֹנִים אָנִי represent an existing belief or claim that YHWH is a father and a master. The following clause, אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לָכֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים בּוֹזֵי שְׁמִי (6d), makes it clear that such a thought or utterance is entertained by the priesthood: it is the priests that contradict their own belief and dishonour (בזה) YHWH.[130] This shows that the claim/belief is attributed to the priesthood. YHWH attributes and echoes the belief, assumption or claim that he is a father and master to the priests: YHWH says "If you say/believe that I am a father…master…"[131]

The claim that YHWH is a father and a master is assumed, i.e., not expressed, possibly because it is part of their cognition. However, it could also be expected to be recovered from the preceding context (1:2, 5). Even though it is customary to describe YHWH as אֲדוֹנִים in the HB, אָב is not so typically used.[132] The relative rarity of the usage of אָב to refer to YHWH in the HB together with the fact that it is readily accessible in the immediate context suggests that אָב and thus אֲדוֹנִים in 1:6 are, in fact, to be inferred from 1:2, 5 rather than elsewhere outside of Malachi.[133] In any case it is clear that they unquestionably held that YHWH was their father and master essentially implying that they honour him, a claim that YHWH rejects as invalid.

Each of the two main (interrogative) clauses (אַיֵּה מוֹרָאִי / אַיֵּה כְבוֹדִי) question the validity of the assumption attributed to the priests. YHWH's questions can thus be

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[129] E-J Noh, 'The Semantics and Pragmatics of Metarepresentation in English: A Relevance-Theoretic Approach' (PhD Thesis, University College London, 1998) 261.

[130] Speech assignment here seems to be problematic: whereas YHWH's words are reported (אָמַר יְהוָה), the object of בּוֹזֵי takes first person singular suffix (שְׁמִי) instead of third. The clause describes the priesthood as the ones that despise (בזה) YHWH's name, a guilt Edom identified with (Krause, 'Tradition, History, and Our Story,' 483); Dahlberg, 'Studies in the Book of Malachi,' 125-6.

[131] One may want to argue that YHWH is making fresh assertions rather than echoing existing representations. For instance, Clark and Hatton maintain that "[t]he conditional clause does not indicate doubt about whether the LORD is a father or not, and may be better translated as "Since I am a father" or as an assertion: "I am your father" (TEV, CEV)": Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. However, whether or not the conditionals indicate doubt regarding YHWH's fatherhood and mastership is not relevant for interpreting this text. The conditionals lay the basis for challenging the beliefs of the priests as they make claims that their behaviour does not confirm. What is being doubted, if anything, is not whether YHWH is a father and master but whether the priests indeed believe as they purport to. YHWH is questioning the validity of the assumption held by the priesthood concerning his status as a father and master in their relationship with him.

[132] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malach*, n.p. Some of the texts in which God is said to be the father of Israel/Judah are Deut 32.6; Isa 63.16; Isa 64.8; Jer 3.4; Jer 31.9.

[133] Cf. O'Brien ('Judah as Wife and Husband,' 241-2) who sees familial theme pervading Malachi. She apparently and rightly makes connection between 1:2 and 1:6.

understood as a protest to assumptions by the priesthood and both can be expressed as follows:

Priests (Israel): "YHWH is our father and master" Mal 1:2, 5 or unstated belief
YHWH: "Really? If so, why not honour me?

Second, YHWH exposes and rejects the assumptions of the priesthood that their sacrifices are of acceptable standard. These assumptions are revealed in the controversy ensued by YHWH's rejection of their assumptions that they honour him. (1:6e-8b).

The accusation that the priests dishonoured YHWH's name sets off a series of questions and responses by the priests and YHWH himself respectively. The status of the offering becomes the center of the dispute as YHWH responds to the priests' question as to how they dishonour him: בַּמֶּה בָזִינוּ אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ (v. 6e).[134] YHWH replies that they despised his name by presenting defiled bread (food) on his altar: מַגִּישִׁים עַל־מִזְבְּחִי לֶחֶם מְגֹאָל (v. 7a).[135] YHWH's response is then followed by yet another question from the priests: בַּמֶּה גֵאַלְנוּךָ (v. 7b). It is an echo question echoing YHWH's claim in 7a that the offerings are inferior. According to the priests, the offerings they bring to the altar are good enough for YHWH. I, therefore, argue that the question is intended to object to YHWH's claim that the offering presented to him was inferior.[136]

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[134] Their question בַּמֶּה בָזִינוּ אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ on its own may or may not be understood as an echo question. It does quote YHWH's words, in fact verbatim, but whether the intention is to challenge his claim or just to express their bewilderment or even to request information on how they dishonoured him may not be asserted with certainty. The uncertainty is particularly strong in light of YHWH's response which may be taken as implying that they are just seeking an explanation rather than objecting. This seems to be the case also in view of it being the first part of the set of questions and responses in the current dialogue. However, as the dialogue goes on (see further below), it becomes apparent that they are questioning the accusation YHWH levels against them. YHWH's reply may not necessarily imply that they are merely interested in an explanation.

[135] The hiphil participle of נגשׁ means "to cause to approach, bring near, bring" (*BDB*, 621d; גאל, pual participle [ceremonially] polluted, desecrated (*BDB*, 146a); לֶחֶם "food" (*BDB*, 537d) must be a general reference to the substandard sacrifices; there is no mention of other types of offerings such as grain.

[136] The question "How have we defiled you?" is problematic because it is not expected, given that YHWH does not say, "you defiled me." It is the food that they present that is defiled. Therefore, it is hard to pinpoint what the question is about. Various explanations have been suggested. One possibility is that the priests simply seek "further explanation" as to how they despised YHWH as they found the response to their first question hard to believe: For instance, Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. However, this interpretation does not explain why גאל takes a second person object referring to YHWH instead of a third person as expected. There are also efforts to tackle the problem through textual

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If their first question, בַּמֶּה בָזִינוּ אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ, was appropriate, the second one,

בַּמֶּה גֵאַלְנוּךָ, is bizarre and elicits a harsh response from YHWH:[137]

בֶּאֱמָרְכֶם שֻׁלְחַן יְהוָה נִבְזֶה הוּא (v. 7c). In his response, YHWH's exposes

assumptions that underlie the cultic practices of the priesthood. He attributes

שֻׁלְחַן יְהוָה נִבְזֶה הוּא to the priests. He alleges that the priests think that such sub-

standard offerings as לֶחֶם מְגֹאָל are good enough for YHWH.

(8)   YHWH: The priests think that inferior offerings are fine.

The priests offer the kind of sacrifices YHWH rejects as defiled believing that they are
good enough and this is interpreted by YHWH as indicative of a low regard for him and
what he deserves. It is difficult to think that the priests actually uttered

שֻׁלְחַן יְהוָה נִבְזֶה הוּא. It is better taken as an interpretation of their thoughts that

undergird their views and practices of the cultic rituals.[138]

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emendation. It is possible that this problem is a motivation for the Septuagint reading which has a third
person pronoun (αὐτούς) as an object of גאל: ἐν τίνι ἠλισγήσαμεν αὐτούς: Also Targum (J. N. Pohlig,
An Exegetical Summary of Malachi (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998) 37. According to this
reading, the question is concerned with how the priests polluted the offering, not YHWH. This line of
thought is followed by some modern versions such as RSV. In yet another solution, Glazier-McDonald
maintains that the priests' intention is "not to question the fact that they offer polluted sacrifices, but to
question how such offerings pollute Yahweh. Because the cult is directed to him, any offense against that
cult represents a direct affront to Yahweh himself." Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 51. Glazier-McDonald's
suggestion is problematic. First, it entails that the priests admit that their offerings are flawed; this is not
plausible in the context. YHWH's further responses in vv. 8, 9 clearly show that the quality of the
sacrifices is, in fact, what is being disputed. Second, it implies that the priests do not know how offering
substandard sacrifices affect YHWH and this is unlikely.
[137] Tasker (*Fatherhood of God*, 160) thinks that even the first question "comes...in a surreal manner."
[138] Malachi (on YHWH's behalf) infers their core beliefs from their behaviour. According to him, the
priests have a low opinion of YHWH (defiled him) and the cultic system thereby failing to understand
how inferior their sacrifices are. As mentioned above, YHWH's further responses in vv. 8, 9 clearly show
that what is being disputed is whether or not the quality of the sacrifices was of appropriate standard.
These responses also imply that the priests' position is that the sacrifices are fine.
Priests: "How have we defiled you?" YHWH: "In that you have a low regard of my table"
YHWH's response shows that the question from the priests, "How have we defiled you?" represents a
stubborn conviction that the offering described as of poor status should rather be good enough for
YHWH. From the priests' perspective, the sacrifices deserve to be on YHWH's table. In other words,
they question YHWH's complaint against the ceremonial quality of their offerings. This is a typical
echoic question in that it repeats part of the previous utterance in order to question some aspects of it. The
question can be expanded as follows: Priests: "How have we defiled you in offering such sacrifices?"
This construal of the priests' question goes well with YHWH's response to their first question that evokes
their second question. Specifically, the use of גאל as applied to YHWH is better explained if the question
is seen as echo question objecting to YHWH's previous response rather than as a request for information.
In this way, YHWH's response to their second question also becomes fitting: Priests: "How have we
despised your name?" YHWH: "By presenting defiled (מְגֹאָל) food on my altar" Priests: "How have we

Following his revelation of the assumptions of the priesthood motivating their cultic practices, YHWH echoes and challenges those assumptions (1:8a, b). As YHWH's utterance (8) shows, the priests must have known that the sacrificial system was operating in an unacceptable way and yet they arrogantly overlooked the problem. In fact, they opt to defend their offerings as appropriate when challenged. This is made even clearer in the following pair of clauses in v. 8a, b as YHWH moves onto expressing the validity of his claim that the priests dishonour him. Here (v. 8a, b) he questions or ridicules, if understood as irony, the assumptions of the priesthood that there is nothing wrong with the sacrifices:

8a וְכִי־תַגִּשׁוּן עִוֵּר לִזְבֹּחַ אֵין רָע
b וְכִי תַגִּישׁוּ פִּסֵּחַ וְחֹלֶה אֵין רָע

The particle כִּי is better understood as meaning "when."[139] The verb נגשׁ used twice in this pair of sentences recalls YHWH's response to the first question in v. 7a. The nature of the sacrifices that is described broadly using a participial form of גאל in v. 7a is here specifically expressed as עִוֵּר 'blind' פִּסֵּחַ 'lame' and חֹלֶה 'sick.' The blind, the lame and the sick animals could be specific examples of לֶחֶם מְגֹאָל 'defiled food'. The point is to confront the priests with concrete evidences and attack their contention that there is no problem with regard to the quality of sacrifices.

The expression (verbless clause) אֵין רָע '(is) not wrong/evil' can be construed as either a negative question or a negative statement. If understood as a statement the sentence is ironical: "When you present the blind for sacrifice, it is not evil! When you present the lame and the sick, it is not evil!"[140] If intended as a question (declarative in syntax), it may be posited as an echo question.[141] Thus, it is difficult to be certain as to whether the

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defiled (גאל) you?" or "How have we defiled you in offering such sacrifices?" YHWH: "By saying, 'the Lord's table is a despised one'" or "In that you have a low regard of my table"

[139] So RSV, NRSV, ESV, NIV etc. REB renders it as "that"; NET "for when".

[140] For views that it is ironical see, for instance, C. F. Keil, 'Malachi,' in C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (eds.), J. Martin (tr.) *Commentary on the Old Testament vol. 10: Minor Prophets* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866-91; reprinted, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2006) 640.

[141] Ch. H. J. van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé & J. H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar for Students* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) §43.2.2. They can be interpreted as questions in that Hebrew does not have to employ interrogative markers to form questions. It could be originally marked by intonation which is lost to later readers. See also GKC §150 a. § 151a for 1:10a.

two-fold clauses in v. 8a, b are intended as ironic or echo question. Either way, they attribute, to the priesthood, assumptions that there is nothing wrong with their sacrifices and reject those assumptions, (8) – (10):

(9)   Priests: "The cult service is all right! There is nothing wrong. YHWH is honoured."

(10)   YHWH: "When you present sick animals, it is not evil!"

(11)   YHWH: "What about presenting sick animals for sacrifice, that is not evil?

If the words of YHWH are understood as irony (10), YHWH's words ridicule and reject the assumptions. If interpreted as questions (11), they put to test the validity of the assumptions of the priesthood concerning the acceptability of their sacrifices.

The stylistic parallelism achieved by the twin-clauses has poetic functions. It highlights the extent to which the problem is obvious. It also demonstrates the degree of negligence shown by the priesthood in addressing the problem or even their obstinacy in covering it up when it is brought to their attention.

It should be noted that רִשְׁעָה, the synonym of רָע that occurs twice here, is used of Edom in 1:4 characterizing the nation as rejected by YHWH. Not only do the questions/statements in 1:6-8b dispute the validity of the belief of the priests that the cult was in order, they also communicate that what the worshippers and the priests were doing was actually רָע. In doing so, they place Israel on a par with Edom. As such, Israel, far from being a territory where YHWH is exalted (cf. 1:5), is a place where רָע is practised.

3.2.2.2.   Priests' Assumptions Ironised (1:8c-9)

As the discourse progresses, the attack on the priesthood and their assumptions takes different forms. Following the rejection of the assumption held by the priesthood by means of echo questions, statements and, possibly, ironic speech in vv 6- 8b, Malachi/YHWH resorts to a mixture of ironies and questions. In vv. 8c-9, we find two sets of ironical statements and corresponding questions assessing the outcome of the action suggested in the respective ironical statement.

8c הַקְרִיבֵהוּ נָא לְפֶחָתֶ֫ךָ הֲיִרְצְךָ אוֹ הֲיִשָּׂא פָנֶי֫ךָ אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

9a וְעַתָּה חַלּוּ־נָא פְנֵי־אֵל וִיחָנֵ֫נוּ

b מִיֶּדְכֶם הָיְתָה זֹּאת הֲיִשָּׂא מִכֶּם פָּנִים אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

The first ironical statement (v. 8c) urges the priest(s)[142] to present their defiled sacrifices to their governor: (הַקְרִיבֵהוּ נָא לְפֶחָתֶ֫ךָ).The statement is ironical because it echoes the priests' assumption that their sacrifices are presentable but the speaker (Malachi) does not endorse the assumptions;[143] in fact, he is opposed to them. The particle (נָא) has an exhortative function and can be rendered as 'please, I pray, now, or then.' It is similarly used elsewhere in the HB to ironically challenge the subject of an imperative (Isa 47:12 – Babylon; Job 40:10 – Job himself).[144] It is intended to increase the biting effect by humbly encouraging the priests to offer the blemished gift to (פֶחָתֶ֫ךָ) 'your governor' and expect a favourable response.

The purpose of offering gifts or sacrifices (worship) is to secure the favour of the one receiving the gift. To that end, the sacrifices have to be of acceptable standard. The ironical statement is thus followed by a pair of questions as to whether their governor is pleased with them (הֲיִרְצְךָ)[145] or grant them favour, הֲיִשָּׂא פָנֶי֫ךָ, literally, will he lift up your faces? The answer is, of course, no!

The second set of irony and question (v. 9) follows the same format as the first in that the ironical statement וְעַתָּה חַלּוּ־נָא פְנֵי־אֵל וִיחָנֵ֫נוּ is followed by an evaluative question מִיֶּדְכֶם הָיְתָה זֹּאת הֲיִשָּׂא מִכֶּם פָּנִים. However, there are some differences here and this is indicated by עַתָּה marking another stage in the development of the argument.[146] Notably, this time, the recipient superior is God. The point is that if it is inconceivable to present inferior gifts to an official, how much more should it be so with bringing defiled sacrifices to God.

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[142] The hiphil imperative קרב is used in its singular form meaning 'present'.

[143] The statement could also be an echo of the general religious and social expectation that inferior offerings are unacceptable or put affirmatively, gifts or sacrifices must be of acceptable standard. In this case, too, the speaker cannot endorse that inappropriate sacrifices are accepted and their presenters granted favour.

[144] *BDB*, 609a.

[145] רצה also occurs in 1:10; see there for more discussion.

[146] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p.

The other difference is that there is no explicit reference to offering sacrifices in this statement as it is in the first though it can be inferred from the act of worship being proposed as sacrifice is part and parcel thereof. Instead, the priests are sarcastically exhorted to entreat חלה God's favour (פְּנֵי־אֵל, literally, God's face). The particle נָא plays the same role as in the previous statement, i.e. it adds to the sarcastic tone of the imperative.[147] Also, with a possible play on the word (חלה "sick animal" in v. 8 and could mean "get sick!" in v. 9) there seems to be a subtle taunt here, perhaps hinting at the disqualification of the priests for intercessory role (or even at possible practices of idolatry in Judah, cf. 2:13?)

The purpose of the entreaty would be for God "to be gracious to us." The verb חנן means 'to be gracious,' 'to show favour' (qal) and "can refer to ordinary acceptance or kindness" or else favour of a special nature, such as pity, mercy, or generosity."[148] The use of חנן adds to the biting power of the irony for God who is displeased with them cannot be expected to respond in the positive way the verb suggests:

> …In all cases ḥānan is a positive term.-It is inconceivable that one can be angry and at the same time show favour. Nor can one receive favour from someone who is at the same time angry. Favour cannot coexist with judgment. It is given or withdrawn according to whether one is positively disposed toward another.[149]

The prophet is the one ironically urging the priests to entreat the favour of God. The first common plural pronominal suffix on the verb חנן probably indicates that the prophet speaks representing the people including himself. He may be echoing the belief that priests are supposed to entreat God on behalf of the people and that they should do so in an acceptable way, i.e. the offerings they bring to God must be of acceptable standard.[150] The prophet cannot be genuine in his exhortation of the priests to entreat God on behalf of the people. He already accuses them of dishonouring YHWH by

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[147] נָא has the same function as in 1:8b. It "gives sarcasm or irony to the imperative associated with it." Pohlig, *An Exegetical Summary of Malachi*, 44.

[148] Fabry, 'חנן,' 23, 24

[149] Ibid., 'חנן,' 24.

[150] חַלּוּ־נָא פְּנֵי־אֵל וִיחָנֵנוּ is "[a] common liturgical formula". Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 54. According to Lee, ('Malachi's Eschatological Figures' Arrival Motif,' 61) "In Mal. 1:9, God puts some words into the mouths of the priests."

presenting defiled sacrifices, a guilt that disqualifies them from interceding for others. This is clear from the question that follows the statement:

מִיֶּדְכֶם הָיְתָה זֹּאת הֲיִשָּׂא מִכֶּם פָּנִים

The answer is again "no!" The expression מִיֶּדְכֶם הָיְתָה זֹּאת most likely refer to the defiled sacrifices.[151]

3.2.2.3. Priests' Assumptions Denied (1:10-14)

Studies of Mal 1:10, 11 mainly focus on lexical and syntactic problems with less attention given to the relevance of the text in the ongoing dialogue between YHWH and Malachi on one hand and the priests on the other.

I argue here that Mal 1:10-11 is a denial by YHWH of the assumptions of the priesthood (see II.3 above). The literary context to which the passage belongs shows this. It is a continuation of YHWH's response to the assumptions held by the priesthood regarding their relationship with him and the acceptability of their sacrifices.

(10a) מִי גַם־בָּכֶם וְיִסְגֹּר דְּלָתַיִם וְלֹא־תָאִירוּ מִזְבְּחִי חִנָּם

(b) אֵין־לִי חֵפֶץ בָּכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

(c) וּמִנְחָה לֹא־אֶרְצֶה מִיֶּדְכֶם

(11a) כִּי מִמִּזְרַח־שֶׁמֶשׁ וְעַד־מְבוֹאוֹ גָּדוֹל שְׁמִי בַּגּוֹיִם

(b) וּבְכָל־מָקוֹם מֻקְטָר מֻגָּשׁ לִשְׁמִי וּמִנְחָה טְהוֹרָה

(c) כִּי־גָדוֹל שְׁמִי בַּגּוֹיִם אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Having disputed the priests' assumption in various ways, YHWH becomes more categorical in 1:10-11. He makes it clear that he is neither pleased with them nor will accept offerings from them (v. 10). He expresses his wish that they shut the temple gates since the offerings brought there are nothing but worthless (v. 10a). He would rather be honoured with pure offerings everywhere among the nations (v. 11).

The text consists of two negative clauses conveying denial in v. 10b, c and several other corrective clauses in two sets. One of the two sets of corrective clauses comes before the

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[151] The other interpretation is that it refers to the act of חלה (entreat) that the priests are urged to carry out: "If you do this will he withhold his favour from you?" (NEB, REB) – a non-ironical interpretation; Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p.; Pohlig, *An Exegetical Summary of Malachi*, 45.

denial clauses in v. 10a and the rest following them in v. 11. I will first discuss the denial clauses and then the corrective clauses.

The negative clauses in 10b & 10c employ two different negative operators, אֵין and לֹא respectively:

(10b) אֵין־לִי חֵפֶץ בָּכֶם 'There is no pleasure for me in you'

(10c) וּמִנְחָה לֹא־אֶרְצֶה מִיֶּדְכֶם 'An offering, I will not accept from your (pl.) hand.'

Both 10b and 10c are denials, i.e. negations of other representations (not negations of states of affairs). They are intended to express YHWH's attitude to existing representations, namely the thoughts of the priesthood. As discussed above, the priesthood thought that they honour YHWH and expect that he is pleased with them and accepts their sacrifices. YHWH echoes (quotes, reuses) their beliefs that he is pleased with them and that he accepts their offerings and denies them. Note that each clause comes under the scope of its respective negative operator (אֵין in 10b and לֹא in 10c). Note also that these denial clauses resemble the corresponding original representations, i.e. the assumptions of the priesthood, in their meanings.

The remaining part of this text (vv. 10a & 11) contains what can be conceived as corrective clauses to the denied assumptions. In v. 10a, YHWH would rather have the offering cease since they are not valued anyway.

מִי גַם־בָּכֶם וְיִסְגֹּר דְּלָתַיִם וְלֹא־תָאִירוּ מִזְבְּחִי חִנָּם

Here YHWH's rejection of the assumption of the priesthood is introduced by an expression of a wish that the temple service were brought to an end: מִי גַם־בָּכֶם וְיִסְגֹּר דְּלָתַיִם, "Who even among you would shut the door?" may be expressed idiomatically as "Oh, that there were someone among you who would shut the gates!"[152] YHWH wishes that one of the priests would shut the gates of the temple so that the offering of sacrifices would stop: וְלֹא־תָאִירוּ מִזְבְּחִי חִנָּם.

The word חִנָּם (at the end of v. 10a) is rendered (English versions) in either of two ways: adverbially, qualifying the act of presenting offerings as vain, or adjectivally,

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[152] Most English versions, such as RSV/NRSV, NASB, NIV, render the verse as a wish rather than a question.

modifying the sacrifices as useless (NIV, TEV). The majority of English versions rightly uphold the first. It seems pretty reasonable to take 10a as anticipating 10b rather than as a description of the sacrifices. The sacrifices are worse than חִנָּם could express and have already been described as such (cf. vv 7-9). The word חִנָּם should, therefore, be rendered 'in vain' in this verse.[153]

If the above interpretation of חִנָּם is correct, the clause in 10a can be considered as a correction of the assumptions of the priesthood. YHWH says that the priests should not bother themselves for something YHWH would not value. They should stop thinking that YHWH would accept their sacrifices.

The cessation of the cultic practice is because of the improper sacrifice that would dishonor YHWH and is, therefore, rejected. Shutting the door would be a vivid demonstration of a termination of the sacrificial system. As such it could also reflect a possible termination of his relationship with Israel. This is amplified in the other corrective clause in v. 11.

In v. 11, YHWH asserts that he will rather be honored somewhere else.[154] The particle כִּי following a negative sentence can be rendered as 'but, but rather.'[155] The particle כִּי at the beginning of v. 11 can, therefore, mean 'but rather'[156]:

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[153] *BDB*, 336c.
[154] Commentators acknowledge the difficulty of interpreting this verse, especially in light of the view that 1:2-5 is concerned with *assertion* of divine love for Israel. Smith, *Micah – Malachi*,' 312-16; D. L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 183. According to Smith, Mal 1:11 is one of the most challenging texts in the Old Testament to interpret. Its apparent contradiction with 1:2-4 which is widely believed to exhibit a "narrow particularistic view" sparked various speculations. Some doubt whether the text actually fits within the discourse context, i.e., 1:6-14). Smith discusses five interpretations, citing their proponents. (1) The early Roman Catholic interpretation was that it is a foretelling of the mass: E. F. Sutcliffe. 'Malachi's Prophecy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice,' *IER* 5 (1922) 502-13; J. Packard, 'The Book of Malachi Expounded,' in P. Schaff (ed. and tr.) *The Minor Prophets*, Lange's Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886) 4. (2) It is a reference to the Diaspora communities of the Jews: Swetnam, 'Malachi 1:11,' 200-9. (3) It points to "a syncretistic view of the worship of the high God in all religions": Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 31. (4) It is metaphorical language contrasting the polluted offering brought to YHWH with the sacrifices offered to heathen gods by their adherents: J. Blau, *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (London: Lutterworth, 1962) 142; I. G. Matthews, *Malachi*, An American Commentary (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1935) 19; T. M. Bennett, 'Malachi,' *The Broadman Bible Commentary* 7 (Broadman Press 1972/1973) 378; Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, 145; Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 613. Å. Viberg, 'Wakening a Sleeping Metaphor: A New Interpretation of Malachi 1:11' *TB* 45, 2 (1994) 297-319. (5) It regards an impending arrival of the kingdom of God: Vriezen. 'How to Understand Malachi 1:11,' 132; Baldwin, 'Malachi 1:11,' 117-24. Another view is that Jewish proselytes are in view in this text: von

"[*But rather*] from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts' (NRSV modified).

If the suggested rendering of v. 11 is correct, it serves as a correction of the assumptions of the priesthood. YHWH would rather accept offerings from the nations and be honoured there.

Together, the corrective clauses in v. 10 and v. 11 provide a perfect antidote to the erroneous thoughts of the priesthood. Whereas v. 10a offers the correction by suggesting a cessation of the cultic practices in Judah that do not honour him, v. 11 does so by announcing a universal worship of YHWH in which his name is extolled.

The threat of the rejection of the cult is strengthened by YHWH's statement that He will be honoured among the nation in 1:11. This is expressed emphatically using repetitions and universal terminologies. The expressions וּבְכָל־מָקוֹם, "in every place" and מִמִּזְרַח־שֶׁמֶשׁ וְעַד־מְבוֹאוֹ "from east to west" shows where else YHWH will be honoured: the rest of the world will glorify YHWH. Note that גָּדוֹל שְׁמִי בַּגּוֹיִם "my name will be great among the nations" appears twice, once at the beginning of the verse and once at the end.

The prophet is unambiguous when it comes to how YHWH will be honoured among the nations. YHWH succinctly but clearly states that the nations will offer sacrifices and those offerings are pure. The nations will do exactly what the priests and the people of Judah failed to do: they will honour YHWH by way of pure offerings

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Orelli, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, 389, cited in Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 58. For a discussion of the various interpretations enumerated above and more, see S. D. Snyman, 'Different Meanings a Text May Acquire: The Case of Malachi 1:11,' *ATS* 6 (2004) 80-95.

[155] Also according to Follingstad, כִּי as an "assertive focus is a case of "mention" because the proposition marked by כִּי metarepresents (attributes) a proposition as a correction relative to the hearer's presumed contrary presupposition (thought)." C. M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle ki*, CD-ROM, Translator's Workplace, Version 5 (Dallas, USA: SIL International, 2001) n.p.

[156] Most of English versions take three different paths for translating כִּי here: JB, NLT both eds. – 'but'; KJV, NET, NEB, ESV, RSV, NRSV, NASB – 'for'; REB, TEV, GW, CEV, NCV – omit altogether

(מֻקְטָר מֻגָּשׁ לִשְׁמִי וּמִנְחָה טְהוֹרָה). The act of bringing offerings is also expressed twice. This strengthens YHWH's denial that he accepts the defiled offerings of Judah.

The importance of the specificity concerning how the nations will honour YHWH is also highlighted by Petersen's observation as he picks up מֻקְטָר and מִנְחַה as key to understanding the significance of the text.

> But why is there reference to incense and/or a pure offering at this point in the text? …incense and offering, in almost meristic fashion, refer to the panoply of Israelite offerings, especially if the incense here alludes to that burned inside the hēykāl. M. Haran has argued that "the Old Testament itself assumes that the customary and proper place for the ritual use of incense is the temple alone"…If Haran is correct, Malachi has transformed this notion of the Jerusalem temple as the sole place for ritual practice and opened up geographically the veneration of Yahweh. [157]

Petersen summarises the significance of Mal 1:11 thus:
"The basic purport of Mal. 1:11 seems to be this. Proper ritual outside of Jerusalem, even outside Israel, can occur…whether or not appropriate ritual occurs in Jerusalem, Yahweh's name will be appropriately venerated in other venues."[158] He also notes that Mal 1:11 enhances the sense of the content of Mal 1:10, i.e. the resolution and closure of the dialogue initiated in 1:6: "This sense of closure is enhanced by the ensuing formulation, Mal. 1:11." [159]

Here YHWH asserts to Israel that there indeed is acceptable behaviour that YHWH would welcome from beyond her boundaries, namely from her neighbours and other nations. Put another way, Israel's exclusive claim to YHWH's favour (which might have led to pride and indifference in discharging the responsibility it implies) will hold no more; YHWH will have true worshippers somewhere else.

YHWH's assertions contrast with and correct the assumption held by the priesthood that they are acceptable, an assumption whose truth YHWH denies. They also contrast with Israel's exclusive claim to YHWH's favour which can be seen from their thoughts that YHWH echoes in 1:2-5.

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[157] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi,* 183-4; M. Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 237.
[158] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 183-4.
[159] Ibid., 183-4.

3.2.2.4. Restatement (1:12-14)

YHWH reiterates what he says earlier, that the people dishonoured his name and the cult (vv. 12-13a-b) by presenting substandard sacrifices which do not recognise his greatness (v. 13c-d).[160] He then asks if he would accept such sacrifices, once again echoing their expectations (v. 13e). It is clear that he rejects that expectation, further negating their presupposition by pronouncing a curse on worshippers who renege on their vows to bring appropriate sacrifices and instead present inferior ones (v. 14). The statement about the curse can, therefore, be regarded as an affirmative correction to the expectation on the part of the priesthood/the worshippers: YHWH would not accept their offerings; instead they are (to be) cursed.

I have discussed Mal 1:6-14 as echoic discourse in which YHWH echoes and rejects the assumptions of the priesthood that they have honoured him and that he is pleased with their cultic services and accepts their offerings (3.2.2). I will conclude the sub-section (3.2) by proposing that Mal 1:2-5 is part and parcel of the larger, unified discourse, i.e. Mal 1:2-14, and is thus echoic (3.2.3). In the following sub-section, I will show how the rest of the questions pertinent to the interpretation of the passage (Mal 1:2-5), namely the ethical problem and significance of Edom, can be accounted for in the ironic reading I am proposing (3.3).

3.2.3. Discourse in Progress: Reading Mal 1:2-5 as Part of a Larger Echoic Discourse (1:2-14)

In this section, I will make concluding remarks that Mal 1:2-5 can be read as part of a larger echoic discourse, i.e. 1:2-14.

3.2.3.1. Ironic Preamble

It is argued above that Mal 1:6-14 can be read as an echoic discourse concerned with YHWH's rejection of the assumptions of the priesthood regarding his attitude towards them and their offerings. It has also been argued that there is continuity between Mal 1:2-5 and 1:6-14 as shown by the linking parallels and structural considerations. The

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[160] The content of vv. 12-14 is largely a repetition of vv. 10-11; new contents include accusations of worshippers offering what they acquired unjustly and of those who possess and pledge acceptable offerings but present inferior ones. YHWH insists, as he does, that he rejects such gifts.

discourse that begins in 1:2 progresses through 1:14. Also suggested is that the love and hate saga in 1:2-5 is to be understood against the cultic acceptability/rejection that 1:6-14 is concerned with. The terms "love" and "hate" in 1:2 are used in cultic sense as their counterparts in 1:6-14. As the love/hate concepts in 1:2-5 are spelled out in the sense of cultic acceptability/rejection in 1:6-14, the fortune of Israel and Edom in terms of YHWH's favour changes. Therefore, read as a set of echoic utterances, Mal 1:2-5 and 6-14 constitute a single, unified discourse communicating YHWH's rejection of Israel's assumptions regarding the nature of their covenantal and cultic status before him.

It can be concluded, therefore, that in view of Mal 1:6-14, in which YHWH rejects the assumptions of the priesthood, his words in 1:2-5 are better construed as also concerned with his response to the same set of assumptions held by the priesthood and/or the community at large: as part of an extended attributive, echoic and dissociative discourse involving echo questions, ironies and denials, Mal 1:2-5 is better understood as echoic speech with the speaker (YHWH through Malachi) dissociating from (rather than affirming) what he says. It is thus fitting to say that Mal 1:2-5 serves as an ironic preamble to the discourse in which the cultic life of Judah is challenged.

3.2.3.2. Subverting Cultic Assurance?

There have been proposals that in ancient Israel, prophets used cultic language in their denouncement of the priestly teachings. For instance, Botterweck categorises into five ways in which the term חָפֵץ is employed in various contexts in the Hebrew Bible. Relevant here is that the prophets used the term in their polemic against "the (priestly) theology of the cult". The usually positive outcome of an established oracle and augury is overturned by inserting לֹא.

> Israel made use of oracles and augury in which, before the specific announcement of the individual oracle, the general outcome of the augury–favourable or unfavourable–was stated in general terms. In his polemic against the cult, the prophet turned the usual answer on its head by inserting *lōʾ:* now the sacrifices and observances are no longer accepted, and the hymns of the devout are no longer heard.[161]

It is not inconceivable that Malachi puts the materials in 1:2-14 in such a way that the first few verses (2-5) serve as a seemingly positive oracle only to be reversed in the

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[161] Botterweck, 'חָפֵץ; חֵפֶץ,' 101.

remainder of the section where, in contrast to אָהַבְתִּי אֶתְכֶם (1:2), YHWH says, אֵין־לִי חֵפֶץ בָּכֶם.

3.2.3.3. Ironic Garden-Pathing

I have discussed in chapter II, 1.3.3, that a communicator may employ garden-path utterances. Garden-path utterances are designed deliberately to mislead the audience in order to achieve extra relevance by forcing a second analysis after processing the next utterance in a sequence.

The positive nature of the passage in Mal 1:2-5 may be interpreted at face value on first pass despite such difficulties as the ethical problem may pose. However, the following section (1:6-14) provides the readers with knowledge of YHWH's genuine assessment of how he relates to Israel and the nations, enabling them to understand his beliefs and perspectives and thus to reassess his previous utterances in 1:2-5.

In 1:2-5, the author adopts a seemingly pro-Israel stance with a very harsh tone against Edom. In 1:6-14, he changes that position, criticizing Israel for its despicable offerings to YHWH and applauding the nations as bringing pure offerings to YHWH. Needless to say, the notion of "the nations" as a non-Israelite ethnic group includes Edom as well. In 1:2-5, Israel is loved and Esau is hated but in 1:6-14, Israel is rejected whereas the nations are accepted. Israel glorifies YHWH in 1:5, but in 1:6 it dishonours him. Edom is called "wicked territory" in 1:4, but in 1:11, the nations will revere YHWH with pure offerings.

Is there a more plausible explanation for such an organization of the discourse? We have seen above in section (1) of the present chapter that various proposals have been put forward to explain how Mal 1:2-5 relate to the context. It is also noted that some of those proposals are better than others. Moreover, it has been argued that attempts to explain the contextual problem tend to downplay the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition and ignore the ethical problem.

3.3.   The Ethical Problem and the Significance of Esau/Edom Tradition

In the preceding sub-section, I have discussed at length how the larger discourse context suggests that Mal 1:2-5 may be better understood as ironic. I will now turn to the rest of the issues raised in connection with the interpretation of the passage: what is the rhetorical significance of the Esau/Edom tradition in the passage? What do we make of the ethical issue that וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי, as an assertion, may involve? I will discuss how an ironic reading not only resolves the ethical problem but is actually enhanced by it. I will also discuss how the Esau/Edom tradition acquires its due significance. Finally, I will point out that the ethical issue and the question of the significance of Esau/Edom have a combined effect of highlighting the ironic nature of the passage.

3.3.1. Ethical Problems as Clues to Irony: Ironic Hyperbole

The ethical problem that the passage poses is well recognised, as the review of various interpretations above reveal. However, an ironic reading of the passage simply does not pose an ethical problem since the communicator does not endorse the utterances; in fact he dissociates from them. I also argue that in ironic reading the ethical difficulty can be regarded as exactly what makes the utterances relevant: it highlights the absurdity and hyperbolic nature that characterise typical cases of ironic utterances.[162]

Three sets of absurd exaggeration can be pointed out in this short dialogue. First, there is an inappropriate characterization of God. Malachi appears to present YHWH as gullible, operating, not out of a righteous judgment, but on the basis of his willingness to please Israel. On the one hand, in an effort to demonstrate his love for Israel, which he contended to have for them, he tells of his hatred for Esau, Israel's brother. He hates Edom because that would please Israel. He does everything to appease them, even if that means a complete destruction of Edom. On the other hand, he does not even bother to provide an excuse to castigate Esau. His fury against Edom has no bound going as far as it takes to complete their annihilation. In Malachi, YHWH appears to act like a people-pleaser.

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[162] Blake sees that the text deliberately exaggerates the convention that Esau/Edom is hated and that Israel is loved. He notes that love to Israel was never stated in first person elsewhere in the HB: Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 127-8.

It is often assumed that the expression "wicked land" implies that YHWH's judgment on Edom was a result of their wickedness and is thus justified. However, it should be noted that the rejection of Edom and their destruction are presented as being initiated at will by YHWH himself and resulted in a perception of Edom as a wicked nation. The designation "wicked" is not the cause for the judgment; it is the effect of the judgment. It is what Israel thinks people would say about Edom as a result of YHWH's act against them. The awkwardness with which YHWH's acts are characterised could mean that the well accepted belief regarding the annihilation of Edom is used in Mal 1:2-5 to mock Israel's perception of how YHWH would fulfill their wish.

Second, the contrast is expressed in strongest possible terms: YHWH loves Israel and hates Edom. While YHWH could possibly contend about his love for Israel by way of reference to one of his acts of salvation, the choice to do so in relationship to his hate for Esau is hardly appropriate. By posing a moral dilemma via the making of such a superlative distinction between brothers, this excessive partiality severely undermines the genuineness of the speech and thus must have clearly signaled that intention to the audience.

Third, there is too much ranting regarding YHWH's love for Israel, but what is actually delivered is very little, if any. The hate and destruction of Edom and the promise to permanently annihilate the nation must have created greater expectation than that would be met later. Nothing significant is said about Israel's restoration, for instance. The expectation created by such grim negativity towards Edom and the contrasting extravagance of love for Israel begs for more implications than the brief conclusion in 1:5 explains. It seems rather that the larger context provides this explanation: Israel's thoughts regarding YHWH's favour are ludicrous.

3.3.2. The Rhetorical Significance of Esau/Edom Tradition: Echoic Use

As discussed above, the Esau/Edom tradition appears in various parts of the HB serving particular functions appropriate to the context. In some of these passages, the tradition is appreciative of Esau/Edom while in others, especially in the Prophets, it is categorically condemnatory. It is widely accepted that the version of the tradition that occurs in the

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prophetic corpus of the HB is reused in Mal 1:2-5. The review of literature earlier in the chapter (see 1.1.) confirms this.

The use of the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5 has its own peculiarities and is rightly acknowledged as such. Despite its brevity, the version of the tradition here arguably presents the most shocking treatment of Edom. It is rightly described as "one of the most succinct, yet forceful comments on Esau and Edom in the HB."[163] Blake observes that the "statement is voiced by YHWH purportedly, but N (narrator) reports this speech in an unusually atypical context, despite its prophetic conventions of form and its traditional expectations."[164]

One distinctive is how the features of the tradition are employed. It is noted that the version of the tradition in the Prophets consists of several features. These are Israel's restoration, the annihilation of Edom and the destruction of the nations. According to Kellermann, not all the three motifs are found in Malachi.[165] Two of the motifs, the annihilation of Edom and Israel's restoration[166] are included in it, but the destruction of the nations is absent in the immediate context. In the wider context (1:11, 14), the fate of the nations is raised in a positive way contrary to how this motif is depicted somewhere else: the nations will worship the Lord with reverence that Judah failed to show.

There are other motifs that are also recognised to be shared by the Esau/Edom tradition in the HB. Anderson, for instance, sees the themes of kinship and land as central in understanding the tradition canonically. He considers Mal 1:2-5 as part of the prophetic tradition and yet acknowledges its distinctiveness. According to him, Mal 1:2-5 is "anomalous" in the way it presents the motifs of kinship and the land.

> While employing similar themes as the other texts in question, Malachi's use of these motifs in relation to Esau and Edom is somewhat anomalous. As with the broader prophetic tradition, Malachi highlights the kinship motif (1:2) and specifically mentions the land as נחלה, "inheritance" (1:3). However, Malachi uses these in a slightly different manner than the other prophetic books… Thus, while Malachi's use of these themes places the book firmly within the prophetic

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[163] Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 219.

[164] Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 116-7.

[165] Kellermann, 'Israel und Edom,' 118 as cited in Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*, 189.

[166] That is, if 1:5 is understood as implying restoration.

tradition concerning its portrayal of Esau and Edom, it uses the recurring motifs in distinctive ways.[167]

Anderson maintains that in other prophetic texts the motif of brotherhood is used as a basis for criticizing Edom for failing to behave in a manner appropriate to a kin (Obad 10, 12). In Malachi, it is used to contrast YHWH's disposition toward Israel with his attitude to Edom.[168] This distinctive use of the motif of kinship in Mal 1:2-5 is significant in that it runs against the corresponding use in other prophetic literature: in the prophetic oracles against Edom, the Edomites are accused of misdeeds against a kin. In Mal 1:2-5, it is YHWH who is acting against a kin.

The other uniqueness of the tradition in Mal 1:2-5 is the omission of any guilt for which Edom is punished. I discussed above that the absence of motivation for the judgment of Edom is significant. The absence of guilt is striking especially in light of the exceptionally harsh judgment. I also argued against Weyde who maintains that the significance lies in having a deemphasizing effect on the importance of Edom in the pericope (see 1.2.4). I argue that the absence of motivation for the judgment of Edom rather highlights the irrationality of the judgment itself.

I have also presented Krause's observation that the usage of the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5 is strange (see III.1.3.3 above). Krause also compares the use of the tradition in Malachi with its use in Genesis and Obadiah, with the latter of which it is said to share a lot about their common subject, Edom. Krause brilliantly captures Malachi's refusal to be aligned with Genesis and Obadiah in its treatment of Edom. According to him, whereas the treatment of Edom is vigorously defended in Obadiah, the tradition in Mal 1:2-5 lacks such justification. In fact, the transgressions Edom is accused of in Obadiah, i.e., בזה is applied to Israel in Mal 1:6.[169] In the absence of any guilt, YHWH's action against Edom is depicted as mere outcome of his hate for Esau.

Perhaps the most remarkable distinctiveness in the use of the tradition in Mal 1:2-5 is to be found in the expression of YHWH's attitude to Edom. The unmitigated statement

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[167] Anderson, 'Election, Brotherhood and Inheritance,' 248.
[168] Ibid., 248.
[169] Krause, 'Tradition, History, and Our Story,' 483; Dahlberg, 'Studies in the Book of Malachi,' 125-6.

וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי is one of a kind in that only "Edom is spoken of in this way".[170] YHWH's hate runs counter to the Deuteronomic decree that "you shall not abhor an Edomite for he is your brother" (Deut 23:7, RSV). The fact that "hate" is used here in Mal. 1:3a seems to deliberately evoke this decree. If so, it is more likely that YHWH dissociates from his utterance, וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי in Mal 1:3a.

To recap, the absence of the motif of the nations in the immediate context and the rather unusually positive characterization thereof in the larger discourse mark a significant discontinuity with the use of the tradition in the Prophets. The use of the tradition to communicate YHWH's contrasting attitudes to the brothers is also importantly distinctive because it contravenes the principle of kinship. Even more important a distinction is YHWH's hate for Esau compounded by an unmotivated destruction of Edom. YHWH's hate of Esau would be a breach of the principle of brotherhood and his actions against Edom a violation of the principle of fairness. Indeed, YHWH's purported attitude to Edom disregards both the biblical tradition and the general human conception of fairness.

One may ask whether these idiosyncrasies are intentional. I argue that they can be regarded as such. The intentionality of the distinctiveness can be pragmatically inferred. First, the distinctions discussed above are unique to Malachi suggesting that they represent a deliberate authorial adaptation. Second, some of the peculiarities, for instance, the absence of motivation for the destruction of Edom, are plausibly the result of conscious authorial decisions that most likely intended to bother and, thus, alert the reader to an atypical use of the tradition.

Third, the author makes some obviously deliberate changes to the tradition. The expression of the destruction of Edom as a past event, for example, is an indication of both the author's knowledge of the tradition and a conscious adjustment of the tradition for the purpose at hand. It is appropriate, then, to think that the author who clearly shows the knowledge of the tradition would also make sure that, at least, important aspects of the tradition are preserved unless they should be disregarded for a purpose. Krause observes, for instance, that whereas the Genesis account "balances Jacob's

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[170] Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 141.

shrewd tactics with deeds more upright and has Esau leaving the stage as a noble man," that authorial vigilance is clearly ignored in Mal 1:2-5 as the two are sharply contrasted.[171]

The intentionality of the distinctions may also be determined from linguistic markers. For instance, Weyde maintains that the use of נְאֻם־יְהוָה in Mal 1:2 and

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה in Mal 1:4 indicates that an older tradition is being applied to a new situation. Weyde argues that the appearance of the formulas in Malachi, each only once, is remarkable particularly against the repeatedly used formula אָמַר יְהוָה. This is so particularly with regard to נְאֻם־יְהוָה because elsewhere in the HB where both formulas are employed, the latter is more frequently used.[172]

Weyde observes that the announcements of judgment in the prophetic oracles (at least those he considers) are all introduced and marked by כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה and נְאֻם־יְהוָה (Jer 49:7, 12, 13, 16; Obad 1, 4, 8; Ezek 25:12, 13, 14; 35:3, 6, 11, 14). He maintains that the Esau/Edom tradition in these passages provides the basis for the tradition in Mal 1:2-4. Following Nogalski[173] and H. W. Wolff[174] Weyde argues that the use of the formulas in Mal 1:2-4 in connection with Edom suggests that the latter is an echo of the former:

> "...in these verses older words of judgment against Edom are echoed; the judgment has materialised, however, and another word of disaster is announced against her in v. 4; thus older traditions are actualised and, once again, applied to the future; the two formulas marking divine speech provide a link to that material…
> But the prophet who conveys his message also actualises and applies traditions, in which the same formulas are used. There may, then, be a double reason why these formulas occur in Mal 1:2.4.[175]

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[171] Krause, 'Tradition, History, and Our Story,' 484.
[172] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 98. F. Baumgärtel, 'Die Formel *n^e um jahwe*,' *ZAW* 73 (1961) 277-90, citing 278. Blake also notes the significance of the singular use of יְהוָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה and כֹּה אָמַר and argues that נְאֻם here "denotes the flip-side of an idea, the converse of the conventional belief that love for Jacob equals hatred of Edom: Blake, 'The Rhetoric of Malachi,' 116-7.
[173] According to Nogalski, if they appear in conjunction with other criteria, formulas such as נְאֻם־יְהוָה may constitute an allusion "implying a deliberate attempt to call [a] text to mind." J. D. Nogalski, 'Intertextuality and the Twelve,' in J. W. Watts and P. R. House (eds.) *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 108-11, citing 109; see also note 19.
[174] H. W. Wolff, 'Obadja – ein Kult Prophet als Interpret,' *EvT* 37 (1977) 273-84, citing 273, 281.
[175] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 101.

According to Weyde, the purpose of using the older material in Mal 1:2-4 is to communicate a similar message to a new audience: it is a threat of disaster against Edom.

It is highly likely that the distinctive presentation of the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5 may suggest a unique, atypical usage of the tradition. Specifically, the representation of the situation of both Israel and Edom here may be different from how they might be treated in other texts dealing with the same tradition. This is even more likely given that the author of Malachi is acknowledged for uniqueness in adapting earlier sources for the purpose at hand.[176] According to the argument developed in III.3.2 above, the discourse context of Malachi strongly suggests that the tradition is used for criticizing Israel instead of condemning Edom: it is used to express a dissociative attitude to Israel's perception of Edom in order to question Israel's own assumption regarding their relationship with YHWH. The significance of Edom in Mal 1:2-5 seems to be connected to this peculiar usage.

How does, then, YHWH's treatment of Esau/Edom fit in the divine economy of justice? Whereas in non-ironic readings the rhetorical value of Esau/Edom is essentially in tension with divine justice, in an ironic reading, this dilemma is exactly what constitutes the rhetorical import of the tradition here: *Israel's belief regarding the divine arrangement where Edom is annihilated for a precarious accusation and Israel is favoured irrespective of its obvious wickedness is naïve.* The rhetorical value of Edom in Mal 1:2-5 seems to be well accounted for if the passage is read as irony.

3.4. Concluding Remarks: Ironic Reading as Relevant Interpretation

In this section, I have argued that the text of Mal 1:2-5, particularly YHWH's answer to the question בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ, can be read as irony. I have discussed at some length how the discourse context strongly suggests an ironic interpretation of Mal 1:2-5. I have also shown that the ethical issue and the question of the significance of Esau/Edom rather highlight the ironic nature of the passage.

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[176] O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, 111.

The ironic interpretation of YHWH's answer to the question בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ, is more relevant than previous interpretations in two other ways. First, it does not communicate a proposition that is perhaps already known to the audience: the narrative about the choice of Jacob/Israel over Esau/Edom must have been known to the people and, as a response to the people's question, it makes little sense as an argument to assert this. As argued in III.1.4 above, interpretations that take the statement as an assertion risk the problem of telling the obvious. YHWH's answer is not meant to assert or re-assert that he hates Esau/Edom etc. but to echo such assertions and dissociate from them. It is relevant as a mockery of Israel's presuppositions regarding its status in comparison to others particularly Edom. This does not necessarily mean that it is not true that YHWH hates Esau/Edom, that he loves Israel, that Israel will glorify him etc. It is simply a case of using previous representations for a purpose that is different from that of the original.

Second, the ironic reading is a more relevant interpretation because the extra processing cost incurred is balanced by a poetic effect. An extra effort is required to process the three pertinent issues that the passage involves: the ethical problem, the question of contextual harmony and the significance of the use of Esau/Edom tradition. The discourse context forces the reader to reassess the passage. The ethical problem also contributes to a search for more relevance as it creates bewilderment. The search for more relevance is then satisfied when the tradition is understood to be used for ridiculing existing assumptions, particularly if the tradition is a common place. Thus, the ironic interpretation of YHWH's answer makes up for the extra cost necessitated by the nature of the passage.

In other words, an ironic interpretation satisfies the search for relevance as the ethical problem gets resolved and the Esau/Edom tradition acquires new and meaningful significance in the larger discourse context which is highly critical of Israel. In short, the ironic reading is suggested by the need to account for the nature of the larger discourse context, the ethical problem and the rather richer significance of the use of the Esau/Edom tradition.

4. Chapter Summary

As well as posing a moral difficulty with the divine initiative of destroying Edom for the pleasure of Israel, the passage in Mal 1:2-5, taken at face value, seems to be out of place with the rest of the book. With this understanding, I have proposed an ironic reading that I claim will better explain questions related to the relevance of YHWH's response to the people's query and the function of the Esau/Edom tradition as well as the moral and contextual problems the passage poses.

The chapter started with a review of previous interpretations along with their explanation of the three questions pertinent to the relevance of YHWH's answer to the question from the people: the relevance of the Esau/Edom tradition, the ethical problem and the question of contextual harmony. Most of the readings do not account for the issue of context, particularly how the passage relates to the immediately following section. Attempts to explain the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition in the passage tend to aggravate the ethical problem while accounts for the ethical issue diminish the significance of the Esau/Edom tradition.

It was then suggested that the text of Mal 1:2-5 can be read as irony. YHWH's utterances are attributive, echoic and dissociative. They are attributed to Israel and used to mock the views they represent. The prophet/YHWH distances himself from the utterances in order to taunt the view that YHWH loves Israel, that he hates Esau and will reduce Edom to a deserted wicked land as Israel remains a territory where YHWH is glorified.

The discourse context strongly suggests an ironic interpretation of Mal 1:2-5. Specifically, in Mal 1:6-14, YHWH attributes and echoes assumptions that the priests honour him and that he accepts their offerings and that they are pleasing to him in order to reject them. Using echo questions, he challenges the validity of their assumptions that they honour him as their father and master. He also mocks their assumptions that he should accept their sub-standard offerings by means of ironic utterances. Finally, he explicitly denies that the assumption of the priesthood that he accepts them and is pleased with them is true. He asserts that he would rather be honoured elsewhere among the nations with better worship. The rejection of the priests and their cultic services and

the endorsement of worship by the nations offer a strong contrast that cannot be missed by the addressees. In light of such a rejection of the thoughts of the priesthood, it is clear that YHWH dissociates from his utterances in 1:2-5 that he loves Israel, hates Edom and the latter will be condemned forever as a wicked nation while the former glorify him.

As well as the context, the ironic interpretation of YHWH's answer to the question בַּמָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ accounts for the rest of the issues that reading the passage as an assertion would involve: the ethical problem and the significance of the use of Esau/Edom tradition. These issues highlight the ironic nature of the passage. Particularly, the Esau/Edom tradition is used in Mal 1:2-5 to ridicule the view of the priests and people of Judah that they were acceptable to YHWH and this was enhanced by contrastive taunting of the view that Edom is wicked and rejected.

The passage of Mal 1:2-5 is, thus, analyzed as an ironic preamble to a discourse of the rejection of Judah and the cult. However, the dialogue between YHWH and the people of Judah does not stop here. The people will challenge him for his stance against them (2:17), a challenge that would spark a stretch of response from YHWH (3:1-12) in which echoic utterances, once again, are employed at key junctures. In chapter four, I will treat Mal 3:1, 6-7a as echoic utterances.

IV. Irony and Denial in Mal 3:1, 6-7a

1. Introduction

The texts of Mal 3:1 and 3:6 have attracted considerable scholarly attention with regard to their interpretation and how they relate to their discourse context. The majority of scholars observe that Mal 3:1 is a response to the criticism that the people are said to mount against YHWH in 2:17:

<div dir="rtl">

17a הוֹגַעְתֶּם יְהוָה בְּדִבְרֵיכֶם

b וַאֲמַרְתֶּם בַּמָּה הוֹגָעְנוּ

c בֶּאֱמָרְכֶם כָּל־עֹשֵׂה רָע טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה

d וּבָהֶם הוּא חָפֵץ

e אוֹ אַיֵּה אֱלֹהֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּט

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17(a) You have wearied the LORD with your words. (b) Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" (c) By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, (d) and he delights in them." (e) Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?" (RSV).

The prophet says that the people weary (יגע) YHWH by speaking against him (v. 17a). Specifically, they accuse him of perverting justice, i.e., considering those who do evil "good" (17c) and taking pleasure in evildoers (17d). The people also ask, "Where is the God of justice?" (v. 17e).

In 3:1, YHWH responds thus:

<div dir="rtl">

1a הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָכִי וּפִנָּה־דֶרֶךְ לְפָנָי

b וּפִתְאֹם יָבוֹא אֶל־הֵיכָלוֹ הָאָדוֹן אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים

c וּמַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם חֲפֵצִים הִנֵּה־בָא...

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"Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts." (RSV).

YHWH says that he will send his messenger ahead of him (v. 1a) before he suddenly comes (בוא) to his temple (1b-c). Also, he describes himself as one who they long for (1b) and take pleasure in (1c).

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Whereas the people are criticised for wearying YHWH by speaking harshly against him, YHWH's response looks appeasing. How does YHWH's affirmative and conciliatory response fit the accusation? A wide variety of different opinions have been put forward.

Some scholars argue that Mal 3:1 should not be regarded as a response to Mal 2:17, which they maintain is an independent passage.[1] Others suggest that the people questioning YHWH's justice are making legitimate complaint to which the response in 3:1 is appropriate.[2] The passage (3:1) is also seen as incompatible with the following verses (2-4) and some see the latter as a later addition.[3]

The meaning and contextual suitability of Mal 3:6 has also been debated.

3:6a כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁנִיתִי
b וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב לֹא כְלִיתֶם
7a לְמִימֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם סַרְתֶּם מֵחֻקַּי וְלֹא שְׁמַרְתֶּם

6 "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. 7 From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them." (RSV).

Scholars generally treat Mal 2:17-3:5 and the following verses (3:8-12) as separate sections dealing with unrelated subjects. There is no consensus as to where 3:6-7 fall. Most commentaries and versions demarcate the first of these sections at 3:5 (for example ESV, NIV, TEV, NET) and group 3:6 with the following section.[4] Others consider 3:6 as part of the preceding section (for example NRSV, NASB).[5] Some scholars question the contextual appropriateness of 3:8-12 as it now stands between

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[1] Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 98; I. Willi-Plein, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, ZB (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2007) 265 as cited in S. D. Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 158-9.

[2] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 283; Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1348; Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 327. Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 61.

[3] For instance, Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 207; Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 176, 177; Nogalski, *Micah – Malachi*, 1049-50. See also Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 283 note 4. B. J. Shaver, 'The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: the Growth of a Tradition' (PhD Thesis, The University of Chicago, 2001) 79-80.

[4] Pfeiffer, 'Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi,' 554, 556-61; Jones, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 198-202; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 219, 241-7; Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 299, 325-34; Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 171, 282-311; Hill, 'Malachi, 2008, 617, 630-6.

[5] E. Assis, 'Structure and Meaning in the Book of Malachi,' in C. V. Camp and A. Mein (eds.), *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, 531 (NY/London: T & T Clark International, 2010) 354-69, citing 357. For more, see Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 159-60.

passages with eschatological orientation (i.e., 2:17-3:5/7 and 3:13-24).[6] The variation in delineation of these sections reflects, at least partly, the difficulty associated with how 3:6 is related to the discourse context. Some scholars see 3:6-7 as completely unrelated to either the preceding or the following section and suggest interpolation.[7] The BHS closes paragraph at 2:16 and 3:12, suggesting that 2:17-3:12 is a unit.

In this chapter, I will propose to read Mal 3:1 and Mal 3:6-7a as echoic utterances in the discourse context of Mal 2:17-3:12. Specifically, I will treat both 3:1 and 3:6-7a as part of YHWH's response (3:1-12) to the people's criticism in 2:17. I will argue that the affirmative response in 3:1 is actually ironic and 3:6-7a is a statement of denial that YHWH has changed. I will suggest that such a reading will solve most, if not all, of the problems raised above. Moreover, it will explain how Mal 3:8-12 fits in the discourse.

In order to accomplish this, I will, first, present a detailed critical evaluation of varying perspectives on these verses (3:1 and 3:6) in section 2. I will then analyze Mal 3:1 as irony and 3:6a and 3:6b as denial followed by a corrective clause (3:7a) in section 3. I will also comment on the possibility of reading 3:6b as irony. Finally, I will discuss the implication of these understandings for a coherent reading of Mal 2:17-3:12 in the concluding section 4.

2. Previous Interpretations of Mal 3:1, 6

2.1. Previous Interpretations of Mal 3:1

The text of Mal 3:1 is generally understood as a response to the people's criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e with only a handful of scholars suggesting it to be an independent unit, separate from 3:1 and the following verses.[8] Thus the assessment of the critics and their criticism of YHWH alter one's understanding of 3:1. As well as 2:17, an understanding of 3:1 is affected by what follows. Particularly, there is a perceived contrast between the tone of 3:1 and most of 3:2-5. Yet, the most important

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[6] See Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 298.

[7] Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 178: 3:6-7 "originally conclude 1:2-5" and as such "grounded God's abiding love for Jacob in his immutability".

[8] Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 98. Deutsch sees 2:17 as "one independent topic: that of justice in the community." whereas 3:1-5 the same issue "but from the very different perspective of hope and promise." In spite of regarding 2:17 as an independent topic, Deutsch also approves that 3:1f is intended as a response to 2:17 (cf. p. 100). Willi-Plein, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, 265 as cited in Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 158-9.

considerations that seem to dictate previous understandings of these verses seem to be found in 2:17: the identity of the critics, the underlying problem that prompts the criticism and the nature of the criticism itself.

In the rest of this sub-section, I will discuss different scholarly opinions on the interpretation of Mal 3:1. For some, it promises hope, for others it threatens judgement, and for a few it is tinged with irony. I will also discuss how these scholars' view of the critics in 2:17 and the motivation for and expression of the criticism influence their interpretations.

2.1.1. A Promise of Hope

The majority of scholars view Mal 3:1 as part of YHWH's promise of hope[9] in response to the people criticizing his handling of justice in 2:17.[10] According to these scholars, Mal 3:1 is concerned with YHWH's promise to come to his people. It is about a positive promise of theophany, of the Day of YHWH on which he appears to solve the problem of injustice the people complain about in 2:17.

According to Stuart, Mal 3:1 is

> a promise…a prediction of positive events, as is made manifest by the two clauses that describe the messenger: 'the Lord whom you are seeking' and 'the messenger of the covenant whom you want'…they are expecting good things to happen when the messenger comes. Following the usual assumption that the Day of Yahweh would be positive for Israel (Amos 5:18-20…) they wanted the divine messenger to arrive.[11]

Yet, Stuart later retreats from his position that 3:1 is a positive promise. In his discussion of 3:2, Stuart maintains that the verse consists of "reversal language".

> …although they [the speakers in 2:17c-e] might eagerly desire /want…the messenger of the covenant to come, in fact his coming would not be pleasant for them. Amos also had the difficult task of announcing that the Day of the Lord would be just the opposite of what the people were naively expecting.[12]

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[9] van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophetes*, 730; Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 101.
[10] Some of these scholars, such as Glazier-McDonald argue that the addressees in 3:6 are different from those in 2:17. They maintain that the addressees in 3:6 are evildoers. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 123.
[11] Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1350.
[12] Ibid., 1352.

Similarly, Glazier-McDonald suggests that in Mal 3:1, the prophet "tries to restore the faith of the people by announcing the imminence of God's intervention."[13] According to her, Malachi points to the coming of Yahweh's day on which the people's dilemma as stated in 2:17c-e is resolved: "On his day, he will re-establish his covenant and enforce its justice thereby satisfying those who questioned him in 2:17."[14] Glazier-McDonald sees 3:1 as part of the larger response to the criticism of YHWH that extends to the end of Malachi.

> Malachi responds decisively by affirming that Yahweh will surely come and soon (3:1). He will first cleanse the priesthood that proper sacrifices might be offered (3:2-4). Then he will cleanse the immorality of the people (3:5). When all have been reconciled to him, blessing and fertility will ensue (3:6-12).[15]

According to Glazier-McDonald, these promises (YHWH's coming, the cleansing of the priesthood and the people etc.) were devoid of power to bring about hope and trust as a result of overuse or contradictory experiences which the people were undergoing. The people were not convinced and demanded more answer: "In what way does religion pay?" they asked; "What has to be gained by being so meticulous in the ritual observances?" After all, it was the wicked who prospered (3:13-15).[16]

As a result, the prophet had to produce another response, i.e., Mal 3:16-24. The second response, according to Glazier-McDonald, is different in its significance. However, beyond stating that "Malachi goes beyond shopworn phrases," she has little to say concerning how the second response is better than the first.

> ...This time, however, Malachi goes beyond shopworn phrases; he announces that prior to judgment Yahweh will send his messenger to prepare the way, to restore harmony and turn the hearts of all to Yahweh (3:22-24). It is not the nameless messenger of 3:1; this time he has a name – Elijah. Clearly, succinctly, Mal 2:17 outlines the dilemma that motivates the remainder of the prophecy.[17]

Glazier-McDonald's comment rather shows how the response in 3:1 is difficult to see as a message of hope and encouragement. However, her view of 2:17 as a stage-setter for the extensive response that follows is to be commended.

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[13] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 123.
[14] Ibid., 132.
[15] Ibid., 124.
[16] Ibid., 124-5.
[17] Ibid., 125.

Scholars recognise that a promise of hope and assurance does not make an appropriate response to the sort of challenge offered by the speakers in 2:17c-e. In order to account for this problem of the appropriateness of the response, the proponents of this view resort to defining the identity of the speakers, the underlying problems that are believed to motivate the criticism and the nature of the criticism itself. The critics, their problems, and their attack on YHWH are defined in such a way that a positive response befits them. In effect, these scholars maintain that YHWH is responding to a legitimate outcry of his people who were troubled by the problem of justice in their society. In other words, YHWH's response is an admission of the rightfulness of the criticism rather than defensive of his own behaviour against such attack.

I will now discuss how scholars who interpret Mal 3:1 as a promise of hope to the speakers in 2:17c-e explain the identity of the speakers, the problems motivating their protest and the nature of the expression of the protest itself.

Theodicy and Unfulfilled Expectations: Legitimate Motivations

There seems to be a general consensus among scholars that the motivation for the people's criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e involves the issue of theodicy.[18] The view that Mal 3:1, as part of YHWH's response to the challenge offered by the speakers in 2:17c-e, is about hope, is based on such conviction. According to Glazier-McDonald, for instance, the people's questioning of God's justice in Mal 2:17e was caused by troubles and "social anomalies" around them and was motivated by a concern with "reconciling God's supposed justice with the evident inequalities of life."[19]

In addition to the general problem of theodicy, disappointments brought about by unfulfilled promises are also believed to be at the root of the protest against YHWH in 2:17c-e.[20] According to Smith, the cause for the criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e is that

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[18] For instance: Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 210, 11. Even though he affirms that the underlying problem is theodicy, Petersen nevertheless, rejects that the criticism is a legitimate one; commenting on the nature of the question, "where is the God of justice," he states that while to ask about justice and God's presence is not unusual (cf. Ps. 89:49), the preceding statements do not allow for this view of the question here (208). Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 175. Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 327. Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 61.

[19] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 123.

[20] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi,* 284-5. Interestingly, Verhoef (289-90) does not approve the position that 3:1f is a promise of hope though he affirms 3:6b as an assurance of YHWH's love for Israel (300). A more detailed discussion of his approach is given below. Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 329-30.

he did not show up as he had promised. Smith specifically states that the "priests and people had accused Yahweh of hiding, or refusing to act, or not returning to Jerusalem and the temple as Ezekiel and Haggai said he would."[21]

The motivation behind stressing theodicy as the root cause of the criticism is that it lends legitimacy to the protest against YHWH, making it appropriate for him to respond in a positive manner. This thesis will argue that the underlying problem that motivates the protest against YHWH in 2:17c-e is YHWH's rejection of the cult and endorsement of worship by the nations (cf. 1:10-11), which the speakers in 2:17c-e consider an injustice (see section IV.3.1 below).

The Identity of the Speakers: The Lamenting Righteous

The identification of the critics of YHWH in 2:17c-e has a decisive implication for interpreting texts under consideration. Verhoef states that the "interpretation of this pericope [2:17-3:5] hinges on the question of the identification of the people to whom the prophet addressed himself. Whether the day of the Lord's coming will be a day of judgment or of salvation depends on the answer to this question."[22]

Some of the scholars who maintain that 3:1 is concerned with hope for Israel conjecture that those protesting are the pious in Judah, deservedly eliciting a positive response from YHWH. Glazier-McDonald, following van Hoonacker and Sellin, maintains that they are "the pious." She maintains that Mal 2:17-3:12 is parallel to 3:13-24 and, therefore, have the same addressees who are referred to as יִרְאֵי יְהוָה "those who fear YHWH" (v. 16) and סְגֻלָּה (v. 17).[23] Yet, it is not clear whether those expressions refer to the addressees in 3:13-24, let alone to those in 2:17. Moreover, it is difficult to think of the addressees in 2:17 as "pious" given their reckless characterization of God. Finally, the prophet's evaluation is that the critics wearied YHWH making it difficult to describe them as religiously devout. According to Verhoef, the view that the addressees are "the pious among Israel meets with so many exegetical problems that it deserves no

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[21] Smith, *Micah – Malachi*,' 329-30. See also Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 281-2.
[22] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 283. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 125.
[23] Ibid., 126; van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophétes*, 729. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch übersetzt und erklärt*, 606 as cited in Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 126.

recommendation."[24] Smith maintains that the addressees are "the people in general, not the pious in Israel, nor the glaringly wicked in particular, as is shown by the nature of the charges in v.[5] [3:5]."[25]

The Nature of the Utterances: A Rightful Outcry

Scholars who read Mal 3:1 as hope interpret the utterances made by the critics of YHWH in 2:17c-e as a legitimate outcry challenging YHWH to act. Various explanations have been proposed to this end. First, some scholars view the question as a lament, a legitimate cry for justice. For instance, Weyde suggests that "the phrase אֱלֹהֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּט...comes close to the terminology of the laments."[26] However, Weyde recognises that the prophet's introduction of the criticism (v. 17c-e) as "wearying" (v. 17a) is against considering the question as lament.[27]

Second, some scholars isolate the question (v. 17e) from the preceding assertions (v. 17c-d). They regard the question "where is the God of justice" as a real inquiry concerning justice, and claim that it can be reasonably addressed with an approving response.[28]

Stuart, for instance, suggests that there is a difference between the assertions (vv. 17c, d) and the question (v. 17e) in the degree of harshness. According to him, the assertions express "frustration and...resignation" and reflect that "a considerable number of [Malachi's] contemporaries...felt that things had degenerated seriously in their society and that God seemed to be doing nothing about it." In a manner that highlights the offensiveness of the assertions, Stuart finds it difficult to imagine that either the pious or the evildoers would affirm them.[29]

The question, on the other hand, "is the more simple and rationally addressable of the two" and "a call for explanation, which, of course, the rest of the disputation will

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[24] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 284.
[25] Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 61.
[26] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 283; see also p. 354.
[27] Ibid., 283.
[28] Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1348.
[29] Ibid.

provide."[30] The question represents "a summation of people's frustration with the level of societal and personal behavior in their day."[31] Stuart puts the question on a par with those asked by figures such as Moses (Deut 32:5) and Habakkuk (Hab 1:2-4) though he believes that the speakers are wicked people.[32]

Likewise, Petersen maintains that the order, in which the statement is followed by the question, has the purpose of facilitating the movement of the discourse. According to him, "the second is, in both form and content, less radical a challenge to Israelite notions of theodicy"[33] allowing the deity to respond as he does in 3:1a.[34] Yet, Petersen sees both the statements and the question as unusual. According to him, though it is not unusual to ask about justice and God's presence (cf. Ps. 89:49), the preceding statements do not allow for this view of the question here.[35]

Both Petersen and Stuart rightly appreciate the indecency of the two utterances (v. 17c, d) preceding the question (v. 17e). Yet, they regard the question "Where is the God of justice?" as a real question expecting an answer and thus less harsh.

However, the question does not seem to expect an answer. In itself it is a claim that strengthens the preceding statements.[36] Thus it is better analyzed as a rejection of the validity of the general notion of YHWH's justice or a specific teaching thereof (cf. Isa 30:18; Deut 1:16-19; 18:12; 25:16). The question and preceding statements (v. 17c, d) emphatically depict YHWH as a God completely different from the one such a notion represents. They challenge the belief that YHWH is just and that he makes sure that people are rewarded according to their way of life, i.e. evil people are rejected and the righteous are blessed. They are effectively claiming that YHWH has changed. If the question is understood thus, the response given in the following verses may not be

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid. According to Stuart, such people do ask this question "because sinners are invariably inconsistent." This stance is not consistent with Stuart's interpretation of the response in 3:1f: how can YHWH respond to a question by evil people in a way that Stuart suggests, i.e. a promise of "the renewal of Yahweh's favour/loyalty/presence?" See Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1350.
[33] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 208.
[34] Ibid., 209.
[35] For more of Petersen's analysis of the nature of the question and the preceding statements, see Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 207-208.
[36] Ibid., 208; Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 287; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 128.

understood as an answer to inquiry. As such, the order in which the statements and question appear has little impact on their respective meaning.

Finally, scholars either stop short of sufficiently explaining Malachi's presentation of the people's criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e, or consider it bizarre, or even smooth it to the effect that they legitimise the criticism and make it worthy of a positive response. Glazier-McDonald, for instance, maintains that the question is so important to the people that it is in tension with Malachi's characterization of it. She points out that Malachi surprises the critics by downplaying what they consider a question of paramount importance.

> דָּבָר can mean either a single word (2 Kings 18:36) or words, speech (2 Sam 23:1), conversation (Jer 38:24). The translation "prattle" aptly communicates a sense of tension and irony. Questions that are of paramount importance to the people are classified by Malachi as foolish, idle talk, childish babble by men who should know better.[37]

Glazier-McDonald considers the question בַּמָּה הוֹגָעְנוּ as indicative of surprise on the part of the people at Malachi's description of their words as wearying to God. However, her conception of Malachi's criticism of the people and her view of the response he brings from YHWH do not cohere well; in fact, they contradict: if Malachi is about to bring a word of hope in response to their question as she maintains (see above), apparently admitting its significance, why would he start with downplaying it?

Moreover, Malachi's heightened description of the matter as blasphemous to YHWH (so Glazier-McDonald)[38] means that דָּבָר has to be understood as representing a more serious phenomenon than just "idle talk". The term דָּבָר describes the means by which the people wearied (יגע) YHWH. In Isaiah 43, YHWH is wearied (יגע) by means of עָוֹן 'iniquity, perversity'.[39] Therefore, דָּבָר in Mal 2:17, i.e., the thoughts or speech of the people can be understood as equivalent of 'iniquity, perversity.' In fact, the complaint that "evildoers are good in the eyes of YHWH; he delights in them" is a perverse characterization and a misrepresentation of YHWH.

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[37] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 127.
[38] Ibid., 123.
[39] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 283.

Glazier-McDonald's observation actually demonstrates that there is contradiction within the passage, namely a harsh criticism of the people followed by an apparently soothing response in 3:1. Malachi's characterization of the דָּבָר of the people can indeed be understood as a highly critical description of their mindset or opinion setting the stage for a rather sarcastic response in 3:1.

Glazier-McDonald also posits that Malachi is more concerned with addressing the concerns of the people than criticizing them.

> Significantly, it is not the act of questioning itself that Malachi decries; rather it is what the questioning symbolises – in this case blasphemy and loss of faith…Although Malachi censures their impatience, their desire for instantaneous gratification, he does not dwell on it. Rather, he tries to restore their faith by announcing the imminence of God's intervention.[40]

However, inasmuch as it is difficult to see a distinction between the question and what it symbolises, the claim that Malachi's concern is more about the implications of the utterances rather than about the utterances themselves does not remove the problem. The fact that he is deeply critical of the people and their words remains. Also, given Malachi's sharp criticism of the speakers, the suggestion that Malachi is less concerned with the people's questioning is rather forced onto the text. Yet, Glazier-McDonald has to be commended for her recognition of the importance of Malachi's evaluation of the words of the people criticizing YHWH for understanding the relationship between the criticism of YHWH in 2:17 and the response that follows.

2.1.2. A Threat of Judgment

Rather than a promise of hope, a number of scholars interpret Mal 3:1 as part of a threat of judgment in response to the people criticizing YHWH in 2:17c-e. The threat of judgment is aimed against the people of Judah including those that are questioning YHWH's justice. The Day of YHWH is presented in its undesirable aspect.

Commenting on the possible functions of "the messenger of the covenant" in 3:1, Verhoef argues that the context supports the interpretation that the promised purpose of his coming is to execute judgment as opposed to salvation. The desire that the people

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[40] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 123.

are said to show for the coming of YHWH and his messenger is to be explained as indicative of a mistaken expectation on the part of the people concerning the Day of YHWH. They thought that it is solely and unconditionally a day of blessing for them.

> The context favours the idea of judgment. The fact that the speakers of 2:17 are represented as longing for the coming of the Lord must be interpreted in the same sense in which Israel, in the days of Amos, longed for the day of the Lord (5:18–20). They really thought that the day of the Lord must inevitably be a day of light and blessing for the people of God...Because of their sins the people in reality became the object of the covenant vengeance.[41]

Similarly, Petersen maintains that YHWH will appear to judge, not to comfort, to show that he does not delight in evildoers. According to Petersen, Mal 3:1 is one of two ways YHWH responds to the concerns of the people as expressed in 2:17; in Mal 3:1a, a reminiscent of Isaiah 40:3,[42] he responds in theophany[43] and in 3:5, unlike Isaiah 40:1-11, with a promise to judge evildoers, not to comfort.[44] Together, 3:1a and 3:5 make YHWH's response complete.

> "With [the] affirmation that Yahweh will punish various sorts of wrongdoers, Yahweh answers, decisively and directly, the two utterances that raised the issue of theodicy. The god about whom they asked will soon appear. Yahweh does not take delight in various evildoers; he judges them."[45]

Scholars who interpret Mal 3:1 as part of a statement of pending judgment against the covenant community (including the critics in 2:17) also treat issues that are raised by those who think the pericope is concerned with a promise of hope. These are the identity of the speakers in 2:17, the underlying problem that is believed to cause the people to criticise YHWH and the nature of the utterances. Whereas there is a general consensus regarding the underlying problem, scholars who interpret 3:1 as concerned with

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[41] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 289-90. Other scholars also see the connection with Amos including the following: Smith, 'A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi,' 62; Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1352. Commenting on 3:1f as a response to 2:17, Smith (*Micah – Malachi*, 328-9) maintains that "…the prophet believed that it was not the justice of God that needed investigating but the impurity of the people needed to be purged."

[42] A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God…" (NRSV)

[43] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 210.

[44] Ibid., 209.

[45] Ibid., 210-11. Petersen does not specify as to who is to be judged, i.e. he is not clear as to whether or not the critics of YHWH will be among those to be judged. The fact that he contrasts Mal 3:5 (judgment) with Isa 4:1-11 (comfort) seems to imply that the judgment is against the whole people, including the people quoted as complaining in 2:17. He also rejects the idea that the question "where is the God of justice?" in 2:17 is asked by afflicted righteous (208). Yet, in his comment on the messenger of the covenant (3:1), he maintains that as in Exod 23:20, the messenger enables the people to obey the terms of the covenant (210). If so, the judgment could not be against the community as a whole.

judgment view the identity of the speakers and the nature of their utterances differently from those who think the pericope is about a promise of hope. According to the former, the people criticizing YHWH in 2:17 are neither particularly pious nor wicked. The view reflected in their utterances is held by the people in general. The proponents of this view also maintain that the utterances are extremely harsh and cannot be understood as a righteous outcry on a par with laments by afflicted godly people of the past.

The Identity of the Speakers

The importance of who the speakers are for understanding Mal 3:1 is well recognised.[46] Verhoef argues that the addressees in 2:17 are "the temple community, the covenant people" as "defined more precisely in 3:3-4 as "the Levites" and as "Judah and Jerusalem"[47] According to Verhoef, assuming that the addressees are the people in general is in line "with the general trend of Malachi's prophecy, namely, to address the people as a whole and to hold them responsible even when the sin is committed by individuals or groups." It is noted above that Verhoef dismisses the view that the addressees are the pious suggesting that it "meets with so many exegetical problems."[48]

Redditt maintains that the critics of YHWH in Mal 2:17 are people who are sceptical of his justice. He thus considers the clause אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם חֲפֵצִים in 3:1 as addressed to later audiences (as opposed to the addressees in 2:17), citing that the sceptical people in 2:17 would not be designated as such.[49] Redditt's observation that the relative clause אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם חֲפֵצִים in 3:1 cannot be an appropriate response to the people speaking in 2:17c-e suggests that 3:1 should not be taken at face value.

The Utterances Are Harsh

Those who view the response as a judgment against the addressees regard the words of the speakers in 2:17c-e as too harsh to be a legitimate outcry that elicits a promise of hope for the speakers. Petersen maintains that Mal 2:17c-e presents the most radical challenge to "Yahwistic orthodoxies" and "this radical affront to Yahweh's capacities as

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[46] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 125; Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 283.
[47] Ibid., 284.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 176.

a just God" is what "prompts the rejoinder in Malachi 3."[50] According to him, the speech is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 18:12; 25:16; the author takes the formulae in these passages in Deut and "turned them inside out" and thus "characterise Yahweh as perverse, as one who approves evil rather than good."[51] As such, the people's question denies that YHWH is just and dispenses justice.[52] According to Redditt if "1:12 portrayed a high level of professional contempt on the part of the priests toward their duties, 2:17 evidenced a high level of cynicism on the part of the people about the justice of God."[53]

The proponents of the view that Mal 3:1 is concerned with judgment reject the attempt to equate the utterances against YHWH in 2:17c-e with the sigh of afflicted righteous which is characteristic of lament psalms. According to Petersen, to ask about justice and God's presence is not unusual (cf. Ps. 89:49); yet the preceding statements do not allow for this view of the question here as they are "hyperbolic" and "contrary to the standard notions of theophany in Yahwism."[54] Verhoef holds a similar stance:

> The reproach of the people must not be interpreted in a positive sense. The contents of their words were different from that of Asaph (Ps. 73), Habakkuk (1:2–4, 12–17)…Their "words" were not intended to remind the Lord of his promises (Isa. 62:6, 7). They lack the character of true piety and devotion…The comment of the prophet is susceptible to no misunderstanding. These thoughts and words *weary the Lord*, they put his patience to the test.[55]

Verhoef also comments that the speech of the people in 2:17c-e show "a formal resemblance with that of the psalmists (Pss. 37, 49, 73) and of Job, but it lacks the true piety of the latter. The unspiritual character of their words and question is evident from the prophet's answer in 3:1-5"[56]

Scholars, like Verhoef and Petersen, who view Mal 3:1 as a threat of judgment acknowledge that Mal 3:1f is not a friendly message to the critics of YHWH in 2:17c-e. They also appreciate the roughness of the utterances by the critics of YHWH as Malachi presents them. Though they share with the rest that the underlying problem is one of

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[50] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 209.
[51] Ibid., 208
[52] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 287.
[53] Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 175.
[54] Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 208.
[55] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 285.
[56] Ibid., 287.

theodicy and similar situations, these scholars do not specify the addressees as pious so as to interpret 3:1f as YHWH's concession to their demand. More importantly, they explain the clauses regarding the addressees seeking and delighting in the coming lord and messenger of the covenant as indicative of the addressees' mistaken view of the Day of YHWH or as directed to a later audience.

2.1.3. Ironic

Some scholars see the presence of irony (in a traditional sense) in Mal 3:1 with differing levels of confidence. Only a few of them fully assert its presence and see, to a certain extent, its significance for interpretation in the immediate context. For instance, Deutsch only senses the possibility of the expression "in whom you delight" as having a cynical meaning.[57] Likewise, Baldwin considers that the relative clause "in whom you delight" to be "probably ironical."[58] According to Merrill, the use of הָאָדוֹן instead of YHWH and the fact that the promise of the coming of God is directed against those "who have despised the covenant" indicates that 3:1 is ironic.

> Malachi...is addressing a people who have despised the covenant and who therefore have no real right to its claims or blessings. This prophet may, then, be employing irony in proposing that the people are indeed not looking for their covenant Lord but, as they have already phrased it, "Where is the God of justice (2:17)?" If they want the God of justice, He will come as Adon, the Lord and Master.[59]

Clark and Hatton agree with Baldwin and Merrill that 3:1 "maintains a tone of sarcasm or irony" and affirm that the two relative clauses in 3:1b, c are ironical: "The words **whom you seek** are almost certainly ironic, since those the prophet was speaking to were not in fact seeking the Lord… **In whom you delight** is a sarcastic reference back to "he delights in them" in 2.17 (emphasis author's).[60] Clark and Hatton suggest translating as '"the one you claim to seek" or "the one you say you are seeking." Similarly they suggest translating as '"the one you say you delight in" or "the one you claim to delight in."'[61]

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[57] Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 101.
[58] Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 243.
[59] Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 371.
[60] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. See also Mackenzie, and Wallace, 'Covenant Themes in Malachi,' 553-5.
[61] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. See also R. E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, WUNT 2, 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 72 as cited in S. Moyise, *Evoking Scripture: Seeing*

It is interesting to see that irony is somehow perceptible in the passage even though not given the attention it deserves, and not carried through to provide a coherent interpretation of the pericope. Particularly, the significance of the use of ironic utterances in 3:1a, b in the ongoing response to the protest in 2:17c-e is not explained to any reasonable extent in the works cited above. Deutsch interprets the passage as a promise of hope (2.1.1) whereas the rest (Baldwin, Merrill and Clark and Hatton) read it as a threat of judgment (2.1.2).

In this sub-section, I have surveyed different opinions on the interpretation of Mal 3:1. I noted that these opinions can be broadly categorised in two: promise of hope and threat of judgment. Also, I discussed how the interpretation of Mal 3:1 is based on the view that it is part of the response to Mal 2:17. I have spelled out ways in which the identity of YHWH's accusers, the possible underlying problem occasioning the accusation and the severity of the accusation provide grounds for these varied opinions. I also noted that a few scholars recognise the presence of irony in the passage although they do not treat it at any significant length. In the following sub-section, I will survey scholarly views on Mal 3:6.

2.2.   Previous Interpretations of Mal 3:6

One of the major interpretive issues in Mal 3:6 is the exact denotation of the terms שנה 'change' (6a) and כלה 'to be destroyed, come to an end' (3:6b) and the relationship between these clauses: what exactly is unchangeable about YHWH and what does כלה mean? How does 3:6a relate to 3:6b? Another major problem has to do with the relationship between 3:6 and the preceding and following verses. Not surprisingly, an understanding of Mal 3:6 is contingent upon one's evaluation of its relation to what comes before and after it: is the particle כִּי at the beginning of 3:6 marking reason and if so, is that reason to be found in 2:17 or in the closer verse, 3:5 or even in the entire section of 2:17-3:5? What is the relationship between 3:6 and 3:7a? Some scholars find it difficult to relate Mal 3:6-7 to 2:17-3:5 at all and many more believe that 3:6-12 is out

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the Old Testament in the New (London, UK: T & T Clark, 2008) 11. According to Watts Mal 3:1 is an ironic use of Exod 23:20.

of place with regard to what precedes (2:17-3:5) and what follows (3:13f). The latter argue that both 2:17-3:5 and 3:13f are eschatological whereas 3:6-12 is not and thus belongs elsewhere in Malachi.

In the remainder of this sub-section, I will survey various interpretations of Mal 3:6 and its place in the discourse context under four major categories.

2.2.1. Words of Assurance

Most commentators regard Mal 3:6 as words of assurance to the people of Judah that YHWH has not changed and as a result they would not be destroyed.[62] However, there is a wide range of views among these scholars as to what is unchangeable about God and regarding the relationship within the passage in question and between the passage and surrounding verses.

According to Stuart, "YHWH does not change with respect to the compassion" he demonstrates. What is unchangeable is that "Yahweh is a blessing God, a forgiving, merciful God." According to Stuart, this unchangeableness is unstated in the verse but becomes "overt" later "in the remainder of the disputation."[63] Stuart's interpretation suggests that Mal 3:6 is more related to the following verses (3:6f) than the preceding (2:17-3:5) and that the intra-sentential relationship is that of cause and effect, i.e. because YHWH does not change the people are not destroyed.

What Stuart and others who read this passage independently of the previous section starting at 2:17 do not explain is why the author takes pain to talk about YHWH's unchangeable love. More perplexing is even why the next passage is concerned with tithes and offerings. Finally, if the preclusion of the destruction of Israel shows YHWH's unchangeableness, would their destruction make him changeable, given the fact that the terms of the covenant provides for the destruction of the trespasser (cf. Deut 28:15-68)?

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[62] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi,* 300; Glazier-McDonalds, *Malachi*, 174, 180; Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 178; Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1363; Nogalski, *Micah-Malachi*, 1056.
[63] Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1363.

Other scholars who uphold the view that 3:6 is a word of assurance to the people acknowledge 3:6a as a response to the thoughts of the people expressed in previous passages such as the accusation brought against YHWH in 2:17. They maintain that the relationship of 3:6a to 3:6b is that of cause and effect: YHWH does not change and therefore the people of Israel will continue to exist. The following verses (3:7f) explain that persistence in sinning on the part of the people was to blame for the problem they were experiencing.[64]

For instance, Verhoef maintains that Israel's doubt of YHWH's love and ways of justice are the motivations for 3:6a: "The solemn assurance that the Lord had not changed presupposes a frame of mind which sincerely doubts the truth of this statement, in connection with either God's dispensing of his justice (2:17) or the profession of his love (1:2–5)." Concerning Mal 3:6b and its relationship to the following verse, Verhoef states that:

> The other translation ['to be destroyed, to be consumed'], which seems preferable, stresses the fact of God's unchangeableness as the reason for Israel's continued existence. Because the Lord had not changed in his love for his people (1:2–5), the descendants of Jacob are not destroyed (cf. Jer. 30:11). This is Malachi's opening statement. Israel's continued existence is due to God's unchangeable love. The real cause of their predicament (2:17; 3:10, 11) must be sought elsewhere. This will be pointed out in v. 7. In v. 6 the people are confronted with the gospel (cf. 1:2).[65]

Verhoef's view that 3:6a is a response to scepticism about truths including God's justice as expressed in 2:17c-e is to be commended. Verhoef also rightly points out that the people's problem, according to YHWH, was to be sought somewhere else as v. 7f shows. However, there are limitations in his interpretation of the passage in question. First, his position that links "change" in 3:6a with love in 1:2-5 is not convincing; even though one may not rule out the possibility of such a connection, Verhoef does not offer any evidence to support his suggestion. Second, the translation of כלה in 3:6b as 'be destroyed' hardly coheres with the understanding of 3:6a as a negation of the accusation in 2:17: "you have not been destroyed" does not make much sense for YHWH in responding to a people accusing him of injustice, particularly, in light of his characterization of them as ever-rebellious (3:7a).

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[64] Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 331-32; Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi,* 299-300; Clendenen, 'Malachi,' 401.
[65] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 300.

2.2.2. Judgment Sure but Delayed

Glazier-McDonald argues that the particle כִּי at the beginning of 3:6 links the verse to

3:5 in which YHWH states that he judges various sorts of evildoers.[66] Accordingly, the

unchangeableness in 3:6a means that "Yahweh has not gone back on his word (3:6a) to

judge the sins of the evildoers and execute the sentence (3:5)[67] but they are still loved as

sons of Jacob and are given a chance for repentance (3:6b):

> The perceived problem with this line stems from the fact that punishment of the
> wicked is upheld in 3:5, 3:6a and then seemingly withdrawn here, "But as for
> you, O sons of Jacob, you are not destroyed," 3:6b. The arraignment of the sins
> of the evildoers in 3:5 and 3:7a leaves no doubt that they are deserving of
> Yahweh's punishment. Nevertheless, they are still the same בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב, the sons
> of Jacob, so lovingly addressed in the first oracle unit, 1:2-5. And it is as such
> that they are given one final chance to allay their punishment. If they return to
> Yahweh, he will return to them (3:7b). Thus, understood, Yahweh is not
> reneging on his promise to chastise the wicked (3:5, 6a) in 3:6b; he is simply
> delaying it: "But as for you, O sons of Jacob, you are not destroyed...yet."[68]

Glazier-McDonald's interpretation seems to account well for the function of כִּי as a

clause-level connective. Yet, כִּי also serves a wide variety of purposes and, though it

helps limit the number of possible interpretation, it cannot fully constrain the meaning

of the clause on its own. Moreover, her interpretation assumes that YHWH addresses

two different audiences: the pious in 2:17-3:4; evildoers in 3:5 and 6-12. However, there

is little evidence for such identification of the audience. Finally, there is little motivation

for YHWH to assert to the evildoers in 3:5 that he does not change (3:6a). It is more

plausible that he is responding to the criticism in 2:17c-e which suggests that he has

changed.

2.2.3. A Result of Redactional Work

Some scholars posit redactional activities in order to account for problems encountered

in interpreting the two clauses in 3:6, particularly with regard to their current place in

the discourse context. Redditt, for instance, posits that 3:6-7 originally served as a

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[66] Glazier-McDonalds, *Malachi*, 173, 176-77, 179-80.

[67] Ibid., 174. Glazier-McDonald thinks that YHWH's speech partners in 3:6-12 are different from those in 2:17-3:5, the former being evildoers and the latter the pious (cf. 126, 173).

[68] Ibid., 180. For a similar interpretation of שׁנה see Waldman, 'Some Notes on Malachi 3:6, 3:13 and Ps. 42:11,' 543-5.

conclusion to 1:2-5 and "grounded God's abiding love for Jacob in his immutability."
As they stand now, these verses "form a vague introduction to the dispute over tithes."[69]
Redditt does not provide any concrete evidence to support his proposal concerning interpolation.

Deutsch views 3:6 as suggesting that "God will not forsake his people": "For I, the Lord do not change" (6a); "therefore you, sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (6b). However, he recognises that this would pose a problem for the relationship between 3:6b and 3:7a, where the people are told that they have always turned away from God. Hence, he suggests that the negative particle לֹא 'not' in 3:6b might be a later addition.[70]

Deutsch's suggestion of a later introduction of negation into the clause in 3:6b may not be maintained as it is expected that later redactional activities generally tend to smooth out difficulties rather than creating them. Yet, he rightly senses the problem involved if the clause is translated as a result clause.

2.2.4. Neither YHWH nor Sons of Jacob Changed

Some scholars view the two clauses in 3:6 as semantic parallels. They argue that the idea of "constancy" is applied to both YHWH and the people of Israel albeit differently: YHWH has not changed; the people of Israel have not changed either. This line of interpretation is also followed by some versions.[71] Smith comments that the sons of Jacob "have not changed either" although he renders the same clause as "continue to exist."[72] According to Smith, the people continued to sin and that their persistence in sinning was cited by YHWH as he defends himself against the accusation in 2:17c-e.

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[69] Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 178, 155.
[70] Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 103-4.
[71] van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophétes*, 733; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 245; Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 332; Tooze, 'Framing the Book of the Twelve,' 194-5; Nogalski, *Micah-Malachi*, 1053-6; Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 161, 164. See also LXX, REB, Tanakh.
[72] Smith, *Micah – Malachi*, 332. Smith seems to assign a double meaning to כלה: He translates the clause as "But you, sons of Jacob, have not come to an end." Yet his comments on 3:6b reads, "Yahweh does not change. The sons of Jacob have not changed either. *They persist in their sins but they continue to exist*" (emphasis mine).

Hoonacker emends the qal perfect כלה to read it as piel "to end, make an end" effectively rendering the verse as "I, Yahweh, do not change; and you sons of Jacob, do not put an end (to your abuses)" That is, Yahweh constantly exercises justice and the people of Judah constantly commit evil." [73]

Similarly, Clark suggests that the verse be translated, "For I am the LORD, I have not changed. And you are the children of Jacob, you have not changed either!" According to Clark, the parallelism between the two Hebrew clauses in 3:6 together with the ambiguity of the meaning of the Hebrew verb כָלָה, and the discourse function of כִּי leads to a rendering that "gives an ironic contrast between the two halves of the verse, and picks up the ironic tone seen in the first person statements in verse 1."[74] Snyman interprets 3:6 in the same way Clark does but argues from a structural point of view. [75]

All the above interpretations allow the verse to link properly with preceding and following verses (2:17; 3:5, 3:7a,). They also recognise the significance of the parallelism between the two clauses, כלה and שנה.

In this section, a survey of various thoughts on the interpretation of Mal 3:1, 6 has been presented. In 2.1., various interpretations of Mal 3:1 have been reviewed. The text in Mal 3:1 is generally understood as the initial part of the response to the people's complaint in the preceding verse (Mal 2:17) but the nature of the response it communicates is debated. There are two views with minor nuances: a promise of hope or a threat of judgment. Several scholars noted irony, particularly in connection with the use of the words, בקשׁ and חָפֵץ.

Likewise, it was noted, in 2.2., that scholarly views are divided on the interpretation of 3:6 and as to how it is related to the context. Most of these suggest that the passage

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[73] van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophéies*, 733. The LXX reads כלא (instead of the כלה) 'ἀπέχεσθε' and connects the clause with part of 3:7a:
οὐκ ἀπέχεσθε τῶν ἀδικιῶν τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν 'you have not kept away from your forefathers' wrongdoings: Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 176, note 13; Mudliar notes that the MSS ends the verse with *sôp̄ pāsûq* (:) following כלה. I. B. Mudliar, 'A Textual Study of the Book of Malachi' (PhD Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2005) 142-3. Cf. also REB.
[74] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p.
[75] Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 161, 164.

consists of words of assurance to the people of Israel. Yet, explanations vary as to how exactly it is an assurance. Some of these (such as Stuart) regard the passage (3:6) as part of the following section and suggest that the assurance is about YHWH's kindness.

Others (such as Verhoef) consider 3:6 part of YHWH's response to the accusation brought against him by the people in 2:17c-e assuring them that he has not chnaged. Glazier-McDonald believes that 3:6 is related to 3:5 and is concerned with YHWH's commitment to the judgment of evildoers that he temporarily puts on hold. A few scholars suggest interpolation.

Scholars such as Hoonacker and Smith interpret it as related to 2:17c-e and 3:5 and concerned with the constancy of both God and the people in different ways. Clark reads 3:6b as ironic contrast to 3:6a affirming interpretations offered by scholars such as Hoonacker and Smith.

What is striking is the lack of consensus and the wide range of divergence among views presented, none of which convincingly stands out as a good interpretation of the passage. In the next section, both passages will be treated as echoic utterances. Specifically, 3:1 will be analysed as irony and 3:6 as a set of denial clauses. The analysis will also include 3:7a as a corrective clause.

3. Echoic Utterances in Mal 3:1, 6-7a: A Response to 2:17

In this section, I will explore Mal 3:1 and Mal 3:6-7 as echoic utterances in the discourse context of Mal 2:17-3:12. I will start with an analysis of the underlying motivation for the criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e and its relationship to YHWH's speech in 3:1-12 (3.1). I will, then, analyze both 3:1 and 3:6-7a as part of YHWH's response (3:1-12) to the people's criticism in 2:17c-e. I will analyse the response in 3:1 as irony (3.2.). I will also analyse 3:6-7a as a statement of denial (3.3). In 3:6a, YHWH denies that he has changed (3.3.1). In 3:6b, he denies that the people have changed. This second denial is expressed ironically. The utterance in 3:7a will be treated as a corrective clause following the denial clause in 3:6b (3.3.2). The chapter will conclude with a summary of findings and a demonstration of the significance of the proposed readings for understanding Mal 2:17-3:12.

3.1. Countering a Counter-charge: Mal 3:1, 6-7a as Part of a Response to 2:17c-e

The passage (Mal 2:17-3:12) is a conversation between YHWH and the people of Judah.[76] It starts with the prophet accusing the people of wearying YHWH with their words (2:17) which he later clarifies, when demanded by the people, as questioning the integrity of his character as a God of justice. Specifically, they say that YHWH considers evildoers good and delights in them and ask "where is the God of justice?" (See IV.1).

The underlying motivation for the accusation is not explicitly stated in this verse. In other words, why the people are questioning YHWH's justice must be inferred from the larger discourse context. It is likely that the people are responding to YHWH's rejection of the cultic community in 1:10-14 where YHWH's statement of rejection of the cult effectively ends the dispute initiated in 1:6.[77]

Recall that YHWH challenges the priests on their substandard offerings (III.2.2.2). Citing problems in their cultic views and practices, he questions their assumptions that they honour him as their father and master (1:6-9). He then denies that he is pleased with them before asserting that he will be honoured by the nations (1:10-11). The dialogue resumes at 2:17 with the people powerfully challenging YHWH's character as a just God instigating the latter to respond (3:1-12).

There are several clues which show that the dispute between the people of Judah and YHWH in 2:17-3:12 is a continuation of their dispute in 1:6-14. First, the same word

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[76] There are a number of scholars who recognise Mal 2:17-3:12 as a unit: Kaiser, 'Malachi,' 455, 491-501; H. M. Floyd, *Minor Prophets* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000) 612 as cited in Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 160. For example, Snyman argues that Mal 2:17-3:12 should be read as a unit: see pp. 160-3. Similarly, despite treating 2:17 separately, Willi-Plein reads 3:1-12 as a single unit designed as an answer to 2:17. It is interesting that Willi-Plein cites the BHS paragraph mark, ס (sᵊṯûmāʾ), at the end of 3:12 in support of her argument but ignores it at the end of 2:16: Willi-Plein, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, 265 as cited in Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 158-9. Torrey and Glazier-McDonald consider 2:17-3:12 as part of a larger unit, i.e., 2:17-3:21: Torrey, 'The Prophecy of Malachi,' 6, note 13; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 124.

[77] D. W. Baker, *Joel, Obadiah, Malachi*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2006) 267-8. Baker connects the dispute between the people and YHWH in 2:17-3:4 to the dispute in 1:6-14.

חפץ is used in both passages in a striking contrast.[78] In 1:10, YHWH says that he has no pleasure in "you" (אֵין־לִי חֵפֶץ בָּכֶם), i.e., the priests (and the cultic community at large). The speakers in Mal 2:17d say that he (YHWH) is pleased in them, i.e., evildoers (וּבָהֶם הוּא חָפֵץ). The speakers in 2:17c-e interpret YHWH's rejection of them and acceptance of the nations as choosing evil over good.

Second, the connection with 1:6-14 is also indicated by the use of אַיֵּה, in 2:17c. In 1:6 YHWH asks "If then I am a father, where (אַיֵּה) is my honour" (6b); "If I am a master, "where (אַיֵּה) is my fear" (6c) [RSV]. It was discussed above that YHWH questions the assumption of the priesthood that they honour him as their father and master (III.2.2.2.1.): if he is their father, why do they not honour him? Now the people speaking in 2:17c-e pose their own question against assumptions regarding YHWH's justice (Isa 30:18): if YHWH considers evildoers good and is pleased in them, is he really a God of justice?[79] Again, their implication is that rejecting the cultic community and accepting the nations is tantamount to approving evildoers; it is an act of injustice.

Finally, אָדוֹן in 3:1b is also used in 1:6c.[80] In 1:6c, the priesthood is accused of not fearing אָדוֹן. He eventually rejects the temple service in 1:10. In 3:1, אָדוֹן is coming to his temple. In 3:2-4, he would refine and purify the Levites until their offering attains the desired standard. In view of the wished-for closure of the temple in 1:10 due to the sins of the priests, his coming to his temple to judge the Levites can be understood as an act of returning. This shows that these two passages are connected in that the dispute between the people and YHWH is once more in view.

It is thus likely that the dispute in 2:17-3:12 is a continuation of the same dispute in 1:1:6-14. The people are launching a counter-charge against YHWH in 2:17c-e with the

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[78] According to Glazier-McDonald (*Malachi*, 128), חָפֵץ in 2:17 is used as a reversal of חֵפֶץ in 1:10: whereas in 1:10, YHWH maintains that he does not delight in those who offer inferior sacrifices, in 2:17, "the people maintain that it is precisely the ones who offer blemished fare in whom Yahweh delights."
[79] The question is better understood as an echo question (rather than rhetorical) intended to communicate a questioning attitude towards the accepted notion of God's justice. Its sarcastic nature has already been noted – Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. See especially suggested alternative renderings such as "Is God really just?" "Is there really a God who is just?"
[80] Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 288.

latter responding to the counter-charge in 3:1-12. If so, what specific charge are the people bringing against YHWH?

The people must be protesting YHWH's rejection of the cultic community and endorsement of worship by the nations. They regard YHWH's rejection of the cult and the endorsement of the nations as a perversion of justice: YHWH's act amounts to choosing evil over good; he loves evildoers and is thus no longer just.

Their assessment of YHWH's rejection of the cult and endorsement of the nations' worship shows how they regard themselves and the nations. First, the nations are evil, so that YHWH's favour towards them means he considers evil good.[81] Second, the people of Judah are good. This implicit assertion contradicts YHWH's characterization of their acts that dishonour him as עַר (cf. 1:8). Their view of themselves shows that they are far from being convinced by his claim that they are not pleasing to God. Their assertions are thus two pronged: YHWH's decision to reject Israel is to reject the righteous and his predisposition towards the nation is to love evildoers. YHWH chooses evil over good.

The following section extending from 3:1-12 consists largely of YHWH's response to his critics in 2:17c-e. In his response, YHWH rejects the criticism that he loves evildoers and urges the people themselves to return to him. His response is given in two phases. In the first phase (3:1-7a), he defends himself against the criticism. He would come but that would mean they will have to be judged for failure to honour him; they cannot stand his return (3:1-5). His return would only vindicate him (3:6-7a). In the second, he calls the people to repentance. YHWH tells the people that they are to blame

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[81] Verhoef lists various opinions as regards who the people in 2:17 refer to as evildoers including the following: "the sinners in Israel": A. Köhler, *Die Weissagungen Maleachis* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1865); "the unbelieving mass of the people: D. Deden, *De kleine Profeten BOT* (Roermond – Maaseik: Romen & Zonen, 1953–1956); "the pagans": E. W. C. Umbreit, *Praktischer Commentar über die kleinen Propheten*, (Hamburg: Perthes, 1846); "pagans especially those who are Israel's enemies": H. Venema, *Uitverkiezen en Uitverkiezing in het NT* (Kampen: Kok, 1965); "the Persians": L. Reinke, *Der Prophet Maleachi*, (Giessen: Ferber'sche Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1856); "the Samaritans": Bulmerincq, *Der Prophet Maleachi II*, 1932; "…profane Jews as well as the heathen": B. L. Goddard, 'Malachi' in C. F. H. Henry (ed.) *BE 2* (Philadelphia: Holman, 1960) as cited in Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 286. Verhoef himself believes that whereas "the reproach against the Lord" originated with the sinners in Israel, it later became "the cliché of the people" in general.

for the severance of the relationship and must return to him for their relationship to be restored (3:7b-12).

The passage in Mal 3:1 and 3:6-7 occupy a special place in the conversation between YHWH and the people. Each marks an important stage in YHWH's responses: Mal 3:1 introduces his defence against the accusation that his rejection of the cult means that he is unjust; Mal 3:6-7a does two things. First, it concludes his defence against the accusation that his rejection means that he has changed. Second, it sets the stage for YHWH calling on the people to return to him. These passages will be explored in the following two sub-sections (3.2. and 3.3). The significance of the proposed interpretation for reading Mal 2:17-3:12 will be presented in section 4.

3.2. Irony in Mal 3:1

We have seen above (3.1) that YHWH's utterances in Mal 3:1 are part of his extended response to the accusation brought against him by the people in 2:17c-e.[82] In this initial response, YHWH promises to come (3:1) but warns that his coming will be catastrophic and undesirable (3:2-5). If this is so, what is the significance of 3:1 in the development of the discourse? In other words, what does YHWH intend to achieve with his response? Is he consenting to the protest or defending himself?

In this sub-section, I will argue that 3:1 is ironic: YHWH interprets the accusation (2:17c-e) as indicative of a desire for his return and attributes this desire to his critics in order to express a dissociative attitude towards it. If so, 3:1 is not a true description of YHWH's appreciation of the people's desire nor is it a genuine prediction of a future event. Rather it is used to show their inability to survive his return because of their sins and a justification of his rejection of the cult or departure from the community.

First, the passage will be analyzed in terms of the RT notion of irony (3.2.1.). This will then be followed by a discussion of why the passage is better understood as ironic (3.2.2.).

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[82] It is generally accepted that 3:1 is part of YHWH's response to 2:17c-e (see IV. 2.1.1, 2.1.2). This thesis does not get into the dialogue concerning the identity of the messenger in this verse. The Lord (הָאָדוֹן) is considered to refer to YHWH (cf. Mal 1:6; see IV.3.1) – Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 371.

3.2.1. Analysis of Irony in Mal 3:1

In this section, I will explore verbal irony in Mal 3:1 under the headings of its essential features: attribution, echo and attitude.

Text

1a הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָכִי וּפִנָּה־דֶרֶךְ לְפָנָי

b וּפִתְאֹם יָבוֹא אֶל־הֵיכָלוֹ הָאָדוֹן ׀ אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים

c וּמַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם חֲפֵצִים הִנֵּה־בָא אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:

"Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts" (RSV).

Attribution

YHWH's utterances in Mal 3:1 are part of his extended response to the accusation levelled against him by his critics in 2:17c-e. In this verse (2:17c-e), the prophet accuses the people of wearying YHWH with their words (v. 17a). He later clarifies, when demanded by the people (v. 17b), that they are questioning the integrity of YHWH's character as a God of justice.

How do the protest by the people (2:17c-e) and YHWH's promise to come (3:1) cohere? As shown above in IV.3.1, the people's protest is concerned with YHWH's departure; YHWH's response to come is, thus, specifically about his return to the temple and the community that he rejected earlier.[83]

The qal form of the verb בוֹא can be rendered as "to return." It has this sense, for instance, in 1 Kings 22:27: עַד בֹּאִי בְשָׁלוֹם. This sense is used in parallel to שׁוּב which is used in the next verse 28: אִם־שׁוֹב תָּשׁוּב בְּשָׁלוֹם.[84] See also Ezra 3:8: וְכָל־הַבָּאִים מֵהַשְּׁבִי. In addition to connecting well with the protest in 2:17c-e, there are

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[83] According to Baker, (*Joel, Obadiah, Malachi*, 269) the "goal of the journey, the "throne room" of the returning King and the place where he belongs, is "his temple." While this term is not used elsewhere in Malachi (cf. 3:10, "my house"), cultic rituals illegally performed there were previously noted (1:7–14). The priests have misused it as if it were their own, but now its rightful owner reclaims possession."

[84] L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) 113.

other reasons to prefer the sense "return" here in Mal 3:1b, c. First, the coming of YHWH to the temple (3:1) is better explained as a return to the temple which he rejected in 1:10a: "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors" (NIV). Second, the idea of returning is eventually made explicit in 3:7b: YHWH demands that the people return to him before he returns.

In other words, YHWH's utterances resemble the utterances of the critics in that both sets of utterances share a contextual implication, namely, that the people are interested in YHWH's return to the community. YHWH's utterances and the utterances of his critics also resemble each other, to a certain degree, through shared formal and semantic properties: the linguistic form חפץ "delight in" in 2:17d is reused as חָפֵץ in 3:1c together with a semantically related term, בקשׁ 'to seek' in 3b. Note that the term is used to accuse YHWH in 2:17 whereas in 3:1a, it is used, together with בקשׁ to praise the people's attitude to מַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית and הָאָדוֹן respectively. *YHWH interprets the criticism in 2:17 as a desire for his return, and attributes this desire to the people.*

To recap, the people are protesting against YHWH's decision to leave them and turn to the nations. This protest implies that they want YHWH back (2:17c-e). It is this implication that the utterances in 3:1 attribute.

Echo/Dissociation

YHWH's utterances in Mal 3:1 echo the desire of the people to see him return in order to dissociate from such a desire and the belief that his coming is indeed good for them. First, the utterances may have a semblance of appreciation for the people's desire. The words חפץ and בקשׁ seem to praise their interest in him. However, as mentioned earlier, the word חפץ was used by the critics to accuse YHWH and thus its use in 3:1 is not expected to be positive. Moreover, as it will be argued below (3.2.2.), it is clear from the wider discourse context that the prophet does not believe that they are committed to YHWH. Therefore, חפץ and בקשׁ are used echoically, i.e., to communicate a dissociative attitude.

Second, the assuring tone of the utterances highlighted by a repetitive reference to his movement towards them (cf. the two occurrences of בוֹא in 1b, c and שָׁלַח in 1a) seems to imply that YHWH is about to do what they would like him to do. In other words, the utterances in 3:1 seem to suggest that YHWH's return would be as positive as the people want it to be. Actually, though, he is mocking their protest that he interprets as indicating their desire for him.

By dissociating from the attributed utterances concerning his return (3:1a-c), YHWH mocks the critics and their criticism thereby defending himself against the accusation that he is unjust. He rejects the accusation that his departure is an act of injustice.

The discourse context shows that, as a response to the criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e, YHWH's utterances in Mal 3:1 are better understood as ironic. Specifically, YHWH attributes his utterances (3:1) to the speakers in 2:17c-e who accuse him of injustice and dissociates from those utterances. This will be discussed below in 3.2.2.

3.2.2. The case for Ironic Reading of Mal 3:1

I argue that, as a response to the utterances in Mal 2:17c-e, YHWH's utterances in Mal 3:1 are to be understood as irony. There are several reasons why such a reading is not just plausible but, in fact, offers a more consistent, comprehensive and satisfactory explanation of issues that other interpretive alternatives would struggle to solve.

First, the utterances in 2:17 to which 3:1 is a rejoinder do not allow for a response as positive as 3:1. There are three features that make the utterances in 2:17c-e not agreeable to a positive response:
1. The manner of presentation of the utterances
2. The harsh nature of the utterances
3. The fact that the utterances are part of the ongoing dispute between YHWH and the people.

Second, there are linguistic clues (חָפֵץ and בַּקֵּשׁ) which suggest that the idea of YHWH's coming is attributed to the people speaking in 2:17c-e and echoed. Finally, the

discourse becomes confrontational as it develops (3:2-5) revealing that YHWH does not endorse his utterances in 3:1. The next three sub-sections will explain these reasons.

3.2.2.1. Instigating Utterances: 2:17c-e

The Presentation of Instigating Utterances (Mal 2:17a)

As discussed above, Mal 3:1 is a response to the utterances in 2:17c-e. The manner in which the utterances in 2:17c-e are presented thus decides how 3:1 is to be understood. We have seen above that some scholars maintain that the complaint by the people in 2:17c-e is to be understood as a cry for justice by the afflicted poor to which 3:1, as an assertion of the people's desire for YHWH and a promise of his coming, is an appropriate response. However, this interpretation fails to take into account how the prophet regards the utterances.

The prophet introduces the utterances in 2:17c-e, to which 3:1 is a response, in a highly critical manner. According to the prophet, by speaking thus the people have wearied YHWH (2:17a). It is discussed above that the verb יגע 'to weary' by which the prophet characterises the utterances is used of iniquity in Isaiah 43:24. Just as iniquity wearies God, so do the utterances in Mal 2:17c-e. The prophet thus accuses the people of sinning against YHWH.

YHWH's utterances, on the other hand, would be sympathetic towards the speakers of the utterances in 2:17c-e if they are understood as assertions of the people's desire for YHWH's coming or as predictions of the event of his coming. Given the manner of the introduction of their utterances, it is difficult to expect that YHWH would be sympathetic to the speakers in 2:17c-e. The utterances in 3:1 are, therefore, better understood as ironic: YHWH attributes the desire for his coming to the people speaking in 2:17c-e but distances himself from them.

The Nature of Instigating Utterances: Blasphemous (2:17c-e)

The utterances in 2:17c-e are provocatively strident and as such do not allow for a positive response. When asked to explain what he means by יגע (2:17b), the prophet quotes, in three utterances, what the people say about YHWH. In all the utterances, the traditional belief about God's justice is challenged: "Yahweh, who had previously

reacted favourably to the good, now has cast his lot with the wicked."[85] According to Botterweck, the first two utterances (v. 17c, d) are blasphemous and subversive.

> In Mal. 2:17, the faithless doubters of the Jerusalem community blasphemously turn the action-reward nexus on its head, asserting that everyone who does evil (ʿōśēh rāʿ) is good in the sight of Yahweh, and that he delights in them (ûḇāhem hûʾ ḥāp̄ēṣ). The consequences of rāʿ and ṭôḇ are turned into their opposites. It is claimed that Yahweh has pleasure in the evil doer, and delights no longer in the upright person who fears God.[86]

The last utterance, i.e., the question in v. 17e, "Where is the God of justice?" is also impious and is spoken by enemies of God and adversaries of his people. According to Weyde,

> The question of the addressees...("Or where is the God of judgment?") resembles the question quoted elsewhere of foreign people ("Where (אַיֵּה) is their God?", Joel 2:17; Pss 79:10; 115:2), or of adversaries of the speaker in the prayer song, Psalm 42 ("Where is your God?", vv. 4.11; cf. Mic 7:10), concerning YHWH who does not manifest his ability or willingness to help his people or the needy. These questions have thus a negative profile.[87]

As we have already seen, the response from YHWH (3:1a-c), taken at face value, is sympathetic to the speakers and their irreverent suggestions. It is difficult to maintain that the prophet would have YHWH respond in such a positive way, because that would amount to admitting that the people were right in their assessment of his nature. That is, YHWH committed injustice: he considered evil good and took delight in evil doers. Therefore, the seemingly placating utterances in Mal 3:1 are, in fact, ironic: YHWH dissociates from them.

Instigating Utterances as Part of an Ongoing Dispute

I have argued in IV.3.1 that the utterances in 2:17c-e protest YHWH's rejection of the cult in 1:6-14. In other words, Mal 2:17c-e is a continuation of the dispute between YHWH on the one hand and the priests and the people on the other. In 1:6-14, the acceptability of the priesthood and their cultic services form the point of the dispute, which is resolved with YHWH's rejection of their acceptability and an approval of his worship by the nations. In their response to YHWH's rejection of the cult and

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[85] Glazier-MacDonalds, *Malachi*, 127.

[86] Botterweck, 'חָפֵץ; חָפֵץ,' 103-4. According to Stuart, it is hard to imagine that the people, "including heterodox and outright evil doers" would have spoken the utterances in vv. 17c, d: Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1348.

[87] Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 282.

endorsement of worship by the nations, the people now accuse YHWH of loving evildoers and question his ways.

If the people's assertions in 2:17c-e, that YHWH is in favour of evildoers, is a continuation of the disputation in Mal 1:6-14, then the response in 3:1 would amount to submission if understood as genuine. It maintains YHWH's position only as an ironic comment on Israel's insistence that YHWH's rejection is unacceptable and that he must return.

To sum up, there is tension between Mal 2:17 and Mal 3:1 in that the harsh comment about YHWH is met with a response that is, at face value, sympathetic to the speakers and their suggestions. The manner of presentation, nature and purpose of the utterances of the critics in 2:17c-e means that they cannot elicit a positive response. In 2:17a, the prophet presents the speakers in v. 17c-e as sinning against YHWH. The expressions themselves are blasphemous (v. 17c-e). Moreover, the accusation is a continuation of the recrimination that starts in the preceding chapter. Here in 2:17, the people protest that YHWH has favoured evildoers, presumably the nations.

The response in 3:1, if taken at face value, is positive. Such a response would mean that YHWH admits that their claims are valid and that he would change the situation they are complaining about by doing what they want. It would mean that YHWH has been unjust or, at least, the people have legitimate reasons to call him unjust: YHWH rejected those who are good in favour of evil ones. He has considered evildoers good and delighted in them!

Therefore, as a response to the utterances of the people in 2:17 c-e, YHWH's utterances in 3:1 are too positive to be taken at face value. An ironic reading of YHWH's utterances in 3:1a-c better fits the protest in 2:17c-e. YHWH mocks the implication of the protest that they are interested in him. He mocks their conviction that he should not have left the community and that he must return.

I will now look at how the grim nature of the judgment promised in 3:2-5 and linguistic clues (בקשׁ and related word חָפֵץ) point in the direction of an echoic reading of YHWH's utterances in 3:1.

3.2.2.2. Further Discourse Progress: What do We Make of vv. 2-5?

The other clue to the ironic nature of Mal 3:1 is found in the development of the discourse in the following verses, particularly vv. 2-5. In spite of starting as seemingly placatory (3:1), the response takes a twist and becomes hostile as it progresses. This shows that YHWH's coming will not be as desirable as it appears to be in 3:1 and as the people would like it to be. It rather shows that YHWH holds them accountable for the problem they protest about, i.e., his rejection of the cult and the community.

First, the day of the coming of YHWH is described as an unbearable day of refinement for the priesthood (3:2-4). The double rhetorical questions in 3:2 mean that no one will be safe on the day of YHWH's coming. He is likened to a smelter's fire and a launderer's soap (3:2c) and his act of judgment to that of a purifier (3:3a). The imagery of purification and its emphatic repetition highlights the intensity of the catastrophe the priesthood is about to endure. He will purge them until he finds the right people who will ensure the presentation of acceptable offerings to him (3:3b-4).

Such a prospect of near-annihilating "purification" renders the statement about the availability of men to bring offerings to YHWH in righteousness and the hope of Judah's offerings becoming pleasing to YHWH only hypothetical. In fact, the statement that the offerings will be pleasing to YHWH כִּימֵי עוֹלָם וּכְשָׁנִים קַדְמֹנִיּוֹת "as in the days of old and as in former years" does not look assertive in view of 3:7a: לְמִימֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם סַרְתֶּם מֵחֻקַּי וְלֹא שְׁמַרְתֶּם "Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them" (NRSV).

Many scholars hold that the statement about the purification of the Levites (3:3b-c) and the acceptability of offerings of Judah and Jerusalem (3:4) indicates restoration.[88] Most

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[88] For instance, Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 243; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 149; Stuart, 'Malachi,' 1355; Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 297.

of the English versions also take this path and render the conjunction וְ (וְהָיוּ) with phrases denoting purpose or result.[89] However, a different reading of these verses is possible. The relationship between 3c-4 to the preceding clauses (3a) can be construed as "until" so that the realization of 3a may not necessarily result in the former (RSV's "till" NRSV's "until" capture this well though the rendering of the clause introduced by the conjunction and the following clause (v. 4) could be better). The following rendering of 3:3-4 is a modification of the RSV and NIV:

> 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver *until* YHWH will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to YHWH, as in days gone by, as in former years.

If YHWH returns, the purification of the Levite will go on until the requirements of bringing pure offerings to YHWH will be realised and he once again accepts the cultic community's worship. In view of the claim that he is unjust (2:17c-e), statements in 3:3-4 hold the priests accountable for YHWH's departure: YHWH rejected them, not because he is unjust, but because they dishonour him. If he returns, he has to judge them for the reason he had rejected them in 1:6-14, i.e., dishonouring his name by offering blemished sacrifices. YHWH's return to the community that he rejected for their failure to honour him will be reversed only when they start honouring him.

Second, despite a pacifying tone to the promise to come in 3:1, the purpose of YHWH's coming is to judge the people of Judah (3:5). There are two main verbs in this verse: קרב "to draw near" and היה "to be". Instead of בוא (cf. vv. 1b, c, 2a) YHWH's coming is here expressed as קרב "draw near" and the imagery is now that of a judge and a witness. The verb קרב has the connotation of battle and its use together with מִשְׁפָּט makes YHWH's coming a hostile experience.[90] YHWH will draw near to judge evildoers including his critics in 2:17c-e. The object of preposition, אֲלֵיכֶם "to you (plural)" refers to YHWH's speech partners, i.e., his critics in 2:17.

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[89] Such as NASB, TEV: "so that"; REB: "and so"; NET: "then"; ESV: "and"; KJV: "that..."
[90] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 156-8.

YHWH will draw near and be a swift witness against various transgressors: sorcerers (מְכַשְּׁפִים), adulterers (מְנָאֲפִים), those who swear falsely (נִשְׁבָּעִים לַשָּׁקֶר), who oppress the wage earner in his wages (עֹשְׁקֵי שְׂכַר־שָׂכִיר), the widow (אַלְמָנָה) and the orphan (יָתוֹם), and those who turn aside the alien (מַטֵּי־גֵר) and do not fear me (וְלֹא יְרֵאוּנִי). Freudenstein proposes that the phrase עֵד מְמַהֵר is based on the law in Deut 17:7 in which witnesses are commanded to act first in the execution of the death sentence: "The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you (RSV).[91]

In view of the criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e, v. 5 holds the critics and those who practise evil accountable for his rejection. YHWH rejected them, not because he is unjust, but because they do not fear him: if he returns he will have to judge them as transgressors (3:5).

Whereas the particular issues of cultic ritual is in view in vv. 2-4, v. 5 is concerned with other general religious and social situations. The purifying judgment of the Levites in vv. 2-4 seem to presuppose the cultic problem raised in 1:6-14 whereas the judgment of various transgressors in v. 5 can be seen as a response to those issues raised in 2:10-16.[92] The connection between vv. 2-4 and 1:6-14 is apparent from their common subjects, the priesthood, the offerings and the notion of "acceptance". The connection between v. 5 and 2:10-16 is less clear. However, there are some correspondences between the list of transgressors in v. 5 and the charges brought against Judah in 2:10-16.[93]

For instance, the noun "witness" (עֵד) in 3:5 echoes הֵעִיד in 2:14; similarly "sorcerers" (מְכַשְּׁפִים) may be thought of as alluding to בָּעַל בַּת־אֵל נֵכָר and "those who swear falsely" (נִשְׁבָּעִים לַשָּׁקֶר) to treachery (בגד) in (2:11). Also, אַלְמָנָה and יָתוֹם (3:5) can

[91] E.G. Freudenstein, 'A Swift Witness' *Tradition* 13 (1972-3) 114-23 as cited by Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching*, 304.
[92] Mal 2:10-16 is a monologue criticism of the cultic community. The passage in 2:1-9 is a monologue continuation of the criticism, primarily, of the priesthood beginning from early on in the chapter.
[93] According to Baldwin (*Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 244), with "the possible exception of the *sorcerers*, who perpetuated ancient superstitions, all the groups listed were responsible for social evils. Malachi dealt in detail with *those who swear falsely* in his sermon on unfaithfulness (2:10-16), and would probably have considered among the *adulterers* those who divorced their wives."

be taken as referring to divorced women and their children in 2:14-16. The term אַלְמָנָה "widow" in its various forms is used to refer both to women whose husbands died as well as those whose husbands were alive. It is used, for instance, to refer to "a state of living for the concubines of David, defiled by Absalom (2 Sam 20:3); and also to Israel figuratively (Isa 54:4)".[94] As well as the loss of husband, the term includes the notion of "the loss of economic and social protection and security" and occurs together "in parallelism with divorced women (Lev 21:14; 22:13; Num 30:9[10]; Ezek 44:22)".[95] Finally, abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה), profanation (חלל) in 2:11 can represent various evil practices committed by the sort of transgressors listed in 3:5.

The judgment of the priests in 3:2-4 and that of all the evildoers in 3:5 sums up the accusation YHWH brings against them in sections preceding 2:17. This response to the people in 2:17c-e is remarkable: whereas they accuse him of siding with evildoers thereby implying that they are righteous people, he tells them that *they* are the evildoers. If he returns, they are bound to be destroyed. Therefore, YHWH's swift act of judgment would not be desirable for them, a clear dissociation from 3:1. Thus the ironic nature of his favourable words in 3:1 becomes more apparent.

Thus the promise of return is not really intended as a genuine prediction of an event. Rather, it seems to show "the inability of Israel to survive true justice at this point in time."[96] A genuine call for a healthy and desirable relationship between YHWH and the people will soon be made in 3:7b-12 following a conclusion of this first stage of response in 3:6-7a. This will be discussed later in section 4.

3.2.2.3. Linguistic Clues (3:1b, c; 2:17d)

There are linguistic cues to the presence of irony in Mal 3:1. The term בקשׁ 'seek' and חָפֵץ 'delight in' in 3:1b, c (respectively) have already been noticed as conveying

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[94] J. B. Scott, 'אַלְמָנוּת,' *TWOT* on CD-ROM, Translator's Workplace, Version 5 (NavPress Software, 1999) n.p.
[95] C. van Leeuwen, 'אַלְמָנָה,' W. A. van Gemeren (ed.) *NIDOTTE* 1 (United Kingdom: Paternoster, 1996) 413.
[96] House, *The Unity of the Twelve*, 159.

sarcasm (see IV.1.3.).[97] These terms echo the term 'delight' in 2:17d. There are two reasons which show that YHWH dissociates from the relative clauses introduced by בקשׁ and חָפֵץ (3:1b, c respectively). First, whereas the people accuse YHWH of taking delight in evildoers, he (YHWH) seems to praise them for taking delight in him and seeking him. Their accusation of YHWH in 2:17c-e which is described in 17a as wearying is recast in 3:1b, c as yearning for him, as a desire to see him soon.[98] The sudden and strong contrast between the utterances of the critics of YHWH in 2:17c-e and YHWH's response in 3:1a-c shows that the echoed terms are not endorsed, highlighting the ironic nature of the latter.

Second, although his imminent coming to his temple could be a perfect response to a genuine desire for him, this is, nevertheless, not the case. The truth is that YHWH's coming only appears to be desirable, but is actually not, as can be seen from the ominous description of the consequences of YHWH's coming in the following verses: no one will survive the judgment on the day YHWH comes (3:2) as it will be ferocious (3:3) and YHWH will act as both a judge and a witness against those who practise various wrongdoings (3:5). To be sure the purification may have positive outcomes: there may be people who offer sacrifices in righteousness and YHWH may be pleased in worship by the community (3:3-4). However, note that this is what YHWH wants to happen rather than what the critics want: such a scenario would only vindicate YHWH; the critics in 2:17c-e are not given what they are desiring. This shows that the echoed terms in 3:1b, c (בקשׁ and חָפֵץ) are used to dissociate from what they seem to describe.

The fact that the speech of the people is painted in negative terms (2:17) and the fact that the outcome of YHWH's reaction (coming) is really undesirable (3:2-5) mean that

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[97] Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 101; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 243; Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 371; Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p.
[98] The seemingly positive portrayal of the people's disposition toward YHWH in 3:1 prompted some scholars to suggest that 3:1 is part of a section separate from 2:17 in the way it deals with the question of justice. As such it is not a response to the question raised in 2:17 but rather offers a parallel treatment of similar question. Deutsch, for instance, treats 2:17 as "one independent topic: that of justice in the community." According to him, 3:1-5 "addresses the same topic, but from the very different perspective of hope and promise." Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 100. According to Willi-Plein, Mal 3:1 begins a new unit (3:1-12) because it answers the question of God's justice in a manner that is different from the way it is treated in 2:17. Whereas the question in 2:17 mocks the priests for the absence of God in their lifestyle, in 3:1-12, it takes the form of an inquiry into God's justice with a genuine longing for its manifestation: Willi-Plein, *Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi*, 265 as cited in Snyman, 'Rethinking the Demarcation of Malachi 2:17-3:5,' 158-9. However it is generally agreed that Mal 3:1 is a response to 2:17c-e (see IV.1.).

the positive depiction of former's attitude towards the latter (3:1b, c) is not genuine. They are used ironically to mock the criticism of the people as hypocritical.

3.2.3. Summary

I have argued above that, as part of YHWH's response to the people speaking in Mal 2:17, his utterances in 3:1 are better understood as irony. First, contrary to some scholars' conclusion that the complaint by the people is a cry for justice by the disadvantaged poor, the utterances in 2:17c-e are so harsh that they cannot elicit as positive a response as that in 3:1. The manner of their presentation, their blasphemy and their employment in the ongoing dispute between YHWH and the priesthood all indicate this.

The prophet presents the utterances in 2:17c-e as a means by which the people sin against YHWH. As well as Malachi's negative appraisal, the utterances are very harsh in themselves: they are blasphemous in that they accuse YHWH of delighting in evildoers. Finally, the utterances in 2:17c-e are part of the ongoing dispute between YHWH and the people by which they contest YHWH's rejection of the cult. Thus these utterances cannot be taken as a just cry for deliverance and cannot expect a kind response. In other words, Mal 3:1 cannot be understood as an assertion of the present situation of the people's desire or a prediction of future event. The utterances are better construed as ironic.

Second, the development of the discourse in the following verses, 3:2-5, reverse the positive tone of the passage and depict a grim picture of YHWH's coming. Thus they clearly communicate that YHWH does not endorse what he says in 3:1. Finally, there are linguistic clues that indicate that Mal 3:1 is ironic. The participles מְבַקְשִׁים and חֲפֵצִים are most likely echo the verb חָפֵץ in 2:17d. Since the people used the word in criticizing YHWH, his use is most likely to be sarcastic, particularly in view of the negativity of the following verses (3:2-5). Several scholars have also noted that these words are used sarcastically.

YHWH's response (3:1-5) to the accusation (2:17) is thus better understood us a defence rather than a concession. It is rebuttal not conviction. In fact, he eventually

turns the blame back on to them in 3:6-7a where he rejects yet another implication of their protest, namely that he changed. Instead, he contends that their insistence on rebellion has kept them apart. This will be discussed in the next sub-section (3.3).

3.3. Denial and Irony in Mal 3:6-7a

We have seen above (IV.3.1) that Mal 3:6-7a is part of the response to the accusation brought against YHWH by the people in 2:17c-e.[99] I have also argued that the people speaking against YHWH in 2:17c-e are protesting against YHWH's rejection of the cultic community and endorsement of the nations (cf. 1:10-11). Thus Mal 2:17c-e is a continuation of the dispute in 1:6-14 (3.1). According to the people, YHWH's act shows that he has changed: he now favours evildoers. Their interpretation of YHWH's rejection of them and endorsement of the nations as a change in YHWH's character assumes that they themselves are good.

In this sub-section, I will argue that YHWH's utterances in 3:6-7a are used to defend himself against the accusation brought against him in 2:17c-e. In 3:6, YHWH interprets the accusation (2:17c-e) as indicating that he has changed (6a) and that they are morally good (6b) and denies both.

I will first analyze Mal 3:6-7a as echoic utterances in (3.3.1). I will discuss 3:6a as a denial of the suggestion in 2:17 that YHWH has changed. I will also explore the possibilities of reading 3:6b as denial and irony: 3:6b is basically intended to deny the implication that the people accusing YHWH of injustice are themselves good; yet, this denial is cast ironically. Finally, I will comment on 3:7a as a corrective clause supporting the denial in 3:6b. Following the analysis of these utterances as echoic, I will show why they are relevant as such (3.3.2).

3.3.1. Analysis of Denial and Irony in Mal 3:6

In this sub-section, I will treat both clauses separately, starting with the denial clause in 3:6a and then the ironic denial in 3:6b. I will treat each passage under the headings of the three RT features of echoic utterances: attribution, echo and attitudinal.

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[99] Likewise scholars (such as Verhoef, Hoonacker and Smith) note this (see IV. 2.2.1, 2.2.4).

3.3.1.1. Denial (Mal 3:6a)

<div dir="rtl">

3:6a כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁנִיתִי
</div>

"For I the LORD do not change" (RSV).

Attribution

The clause in 3:6a is part of YHWH's response to the accusation brought against him in 2:17c-e. In 2:17 c-e, the people accuse YHWH of considering evildoers good and of being delighted in evildoers. They then ask "where is the God of justice?" In 3:6a, YHWH says that he has not changed. How do the charge the people bring against YHWH and his response cohere?

As a continuation of the dispute in 1:6-14 where YHWH rejects the cultic community and endorses worship by the nations, the people invert the well accepted assumption that YHWH hates evildoers and is delighted in righteousness (2:17c, d). They also challenge the validity of the well accepted belief that YHWH is a God of justice (2:17e). Thus the people are implicating that YHWH is no longer a God of justice. By turning away from the cultic community and by accepting the nations, YHWH has changed. YHWH's response that he does not change (לֹא שָׁנִיתִי) is thus a rejoinder to this implicature that he has changed.

In other words, YHWH's utterance in 3:6a (שָׁנִיתִי) resembles the utterances of the critics in that both sets of utterances share a contextual implication, namely, that he has changed. YHWH interprets the utterances in 2:17c-e as implicating that he has changed and attributes this implicature to the people in 2:17c-e.

Denial (metalinguistic negation) is different from ordinary (descriptive) negation in that the material under the scope of negation is attributed (see II.3.3.2). Here in Mal 3:6a, שָׁנִיתִי is under the scope of the negation לֹא and is attributive.

Note that the attribution is tacit. That is, there is no overt linguistic indicator that YHWH's utterance in 3:6a is an interpretation of the utterances of the people in 2:17. For instance, YHWH's utterance in 3:6a does not involve any word from 2:17 where the

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idea of "change" is rather expressed in different terms and is only inferred. There are only contextual properties that are shared between the source utterances in 2:17 and the utterance here under consideration. In other words, the relationship between 3:6a and 2:17c-e is that of interpretive resemblance.[100]

Echo and Denial

YHWH's utterance in Mal 3:6a (לֹא שָׁנִיתִי) echoes the implicature of the utterances of the people in 2:17c-e in order to communicate his attitude to the truthfulness of those utterances: YHWH denies that he changes.[101] YHWH attributes to the people criticizing him in 2:17c-e the allegation that he has changed and denies the allegation. In the following verse (3:6b), he rejects yet another thought represented by the utterances in 2:17c-e.

3.3.1.2. Denial and Irony (Mal 3:6b)

3.6b וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב לֹא כְלִיתֶם:

"You, children of Jacob, you have not changed either!"[102]

Attribution

The clause in 3:6b is part of YHWH's response to the accusation brought against him in 2:17c-e. In 2:17c-e, the people accuse YHWH of considering evildoers good and of being delighted in evildoers. They also ask "where is the God of justice?" In 3:6b, YHWH says that "you have not changed either." How do the charge the people bring against YHWH and his response cohere?

As part of the dispute in 1:6-14 where YHWH rejects the cultic community and sanctions worship by the nations, the people accuse YHWH of favouring evildoers and question if he is really just. They complain that YHWH exchanged the consequences of evil for those of good and vice versa. The accusation assumes that they themselves are

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[100] There need not be linguistic identity in attribution. As it is discussed in II.1.3.4, 2.2.1, the relationship between attributed utterances and their original sources is determined by resemblance, which ranges from linguistic identity to meaning property.

[101] In contrast to descriptive negation, denial is used to express attitudes (see II.3.3.2).

[102] Clark and Hatton, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, n.p. See IV. 2.2.4, 3.3.2 for more explanation on this rendering. LXX renders כלה with 'ἀπέχεσθε' and connects the clause with part of 3:7a: οὐκ ἀπέχεσθε τῶν ἀδικιῶν τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν 'you have not kept away from your forefathers' wrongdoings. Pohlig, *An Exegetical Summary of Malachi*.

good and thus victims of YHWH's handling of justice. YHWH's response that they have not ceased (לֹא כְלִיתֶם) is thus a rejoinder to this assumption regarding their moral situation. Part of the utterance, i.e., the clause כְלִיתֶם is under the scope of the negation operator לֹא and is attributive. YHWH interprets the utterances in 2:17c-e as involving the assumption that the speakers are good and attributes this assumption to them.

The attribution in Mal 3:6b is complex since there are at least two sources to which the verb כלה "to come to an end, cease" can be attributed. The accusation against YHWH by the people in 2:17c-e is one of two possible sources of the idea of "coming to an end", "ceasing"[103] etc. which YHWH is employing here in 3:6b (see 3.3.2 below for more).

The other possible source of the idea of כלה in 3:6b is YHWH's own utterance in 3:6a that he has not changed. Given the fact that these are parallel clauses it is highly likely that the author makes use of related terminologies. In fact, from the syntactic and semantic relatedness that the clauses display, one can reasonably deduct that there is a deliberate act of creating ironic contrast between the constituents of the twin clauses here in 3:6 (see 3.3.2 below for further discussion). Thus, there is a possibility that כלה in Mal 3:6b is an interpretation of שׁנה in 3:6a: they share a semantic domain of constancy.

Note that the attribution here, like the one in 3:6a above, is tacit. That is, there is no overt linguistic indicator that YHWH's utterance in 3:6a is an interpretation of the utterances of the people in 2:17. For instance, YHWH's utterance in 3:6a does not involve any word from 2:17. Similarly, there is no formal linguistic similarity between כלה and שׁנה. There are only contextual properties that are shared between the source utterances in 2:17 and 3:6a and the utterance in 3:6b. In other words, as was the case with 3.6a, the relationship between 3:6b on the one hand and 2:17c-e and 3:6a on the other is that of interpretive resemblance.[104]

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[103] *BDB*, 477b.

[104] Perhaps the major reason for scholars to miss the connection between 3:6 and the people's criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e is that there is little linguistic similarity between the utterances. However, there need

Echo/Denial & Dissociation

YHWH attributes the assumption that the people speaking in 2:17c-e are righteous in order to express his attitude towards the assumption. Specifically, he denies that the people were ever good people, that they were ever righteous. The utterance in 3:7a corrects the assumption that they are good and strengthens the denial. It does so by asserting that the people have rather been wayward since ancient times.

Also, possibly, YHWH attributes the word כלה to himself (his previous use in 3:6a of שׁנה) so as to dissociate himself from it. YHWH says that he does not change (3:6a) and that Israel, likewise, has not changed (3:6b). But it is clear from the next clause (3:7a) that YHWH is not affirming their unchangeableness as faithfulness as he does with his own unchangeableness. In fact he is distancing himself from it (desirable unchangeableness).

To put it differently, what makes the use of כלה in 3:6b ironical is that, at first glance, it gives their "not-changing" a semblance of desirability which YHWH is not endorsing. YHWH echoes the negated שׁנה from 3:6a and dissociates from its connotation of desirable constancy but affirms the negation itself. The people of Israel, like YHWH, have not changed; but whereas YHWH's constancy is desirable, theirs is not. YHWH has succeeded in not changing but they have failed in not changing. Thus 3:6b is a denial expressed in an ironic way. The ironic use of כלה, which seems to be inspired by its relatedness to שׁנה may explain why YHWH did not use a rather direct denial, such as "you have not been good."

Therefore, it can be said that 3:6b as a denial echoes Mal 2:17c-e whereas its ironic feature arises from the contrastive reuse of the notion of constancy from 3:6a. By

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not be linguistic identity in attribution. As it is discussed in II.1.3.4, 2.2.1, the relationship between attributed utterances and their original sources is determined by resemblance, which ranges from linguistic identity to meaning property. Perhaps the major reason for scholars to miss the connection between 3:6b and the people's criticism of YHWH in 2:17c-e is that there is little linguistic similarity between the utterances.

echoing the assumption of the people, YHWH denies that their assumption is correct and, by echoing his own word שׁנה, he adds an ironic wit to his denial.

Denial (metalinguistic negation) may include corrective clauses (see II.3.3.3). It should be clear that the clause in 3:7a offers correction to what the clause in 3:6b is used to deny, namely that the people are morally good.

לְמִימֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם סַרְתֶּם מֵחֻקַּי וְלֹא שְׁמַרְתֶּם

"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them" (RSV).

In this verse, YHWH accuses them that they have always been disobedient correcting their claim implied in their accusation of YHWH in 2:17c-e that they are good.

In summary, I have shown, in this section, that YHWH's utterance in Mal 3:1 can be interpreted as irony. Likewise, I have demonstrated that the utterances in 3:6 are echoic: 3:6a is denial and 3:6b is ironic as well as denial. I have also indicated that 3:7a can be taken as corrective clause for the assumption negated in 3:6b. I will now discuss why utterances in 3:6 are better construed as echoic (3.3.2).

3.3.2. The Case for Denial in 3:6a and Denial and Irony in 3:6b

I argue that the utterances in Mal 3:6 are more plausibly to be attributable to previous speakers than to be new assertions. I specifically argue that Mal 3:6a is a denial of the accusation that YHWH has changed as implied in the people's utterances in 2:17c-e. I also argue that the verb כלה in Mal 3:6b is used ironically and the clause as a whole is used to deny the assumption that the people are morally good as also implicated in the accusation against YHWH. Several considerations substantiate these claims. These are the relevance of 3:6 as a response to 2:17, the role of 3:6 in the organization of different parts of the discourse and the syntactic and semantic relationship between the three clauses in 3:6-7a.

First, the passage in Mal 3:6a acquires much relevance if it is understood as part of the response to the people questioning the ways of YHWH in 2:17c-e. In order to understand the communicative intention of the passage, one has to ask the motivation

behind the utterances assigned to YHWH: why would YHWH

say כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁנִיתִי 'I, YHWH, have not changed'? The answer is to be found

in the ongoing response to the people's utterances in 2:17. There seem to be no better

alternatives to this interpretation. The same contextual constraint can be applied to the

utterance in Mal 3:6b: it is the accusation brought against YHWH in 2:17 that occasions

the utterance. Reading the text (Mal 3:6) as though it is separate from the preceding

passage assigns communicative purposes that are not constrained by the immediate

literary context, which is at best speculative.

Second, the proposed reading of 3:6b reinforces the recognition of the fact that the two

clauses in the passage exhibit a well crafted and presumably ostensive parallelism (see

earlier comments parallelism in this verse IV.2.2.4; also see II.1.3.3 for stylistic

parallelism and its poetic effect).

6a כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁנִיתִי
b וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב לֹא כְלִיתֶם:

There are two parallel clauses sharing similar syntactic and semantic properties. First,

both clauses have similar syntactic construction. Both clauses consist of the same

number of constituents serving similar functions (a conjunction, appositional subject or

verbless clause, particle of negation and a main verb). Such a construction poses a

beautiful and stark comparison between the constituents of the clauses. Notably, the

subject in each clause involves a noun (יְהוָה and בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב) and its respective pronoun

(אֲנִי and אַתֶּם) in an appositional structure highlighting the comparison. Second, the

verb שׁנה in the first clause is related semantically to its counterpart, כלה, in the second

as the idea of change of state is a common denominator in both: שׁנה means 'to change,

alter' whereas כלה means "to be complete", "to be at an end, to be finished."[105]

Pertaining to the overlap in their meaning and the syntactic environment they are

employed in, the verbs (שׁנה and כלה) are most likely used to contrast YHWH and the

people against a common element of constancy. Also, the appositional structure

acquires its fullest significance if these clauses are seen as contrasting YHWH and the

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[105] *BDB*, 477b.

people. The reading offered in this thesis explains the semantic parallelism between the verbs, i.e., the notion of constancy and the contrastive application of this shared notion. It also recognises the poetic parallelism contained in the syntactic and semantic properties of the two clauses.

Third, understanding the utterances in Mal 3:6 as echoic utterances (denial in 3:6a and ironic denial in 3:6b) gives the passages their full significance in the context in terms of addressing several issues of coherence, such as those raised above (IV.1.)[106] Read as attributed utterances with 3:7a as a corrective clause, Mal 3:6 connects the preceding passage (3:1-5) with the following (3:7b-12) to form a unified discourse featuring YHWH's two-stage reply to the accusation brought against him in 2:17. The statement of denial in 3:6a concludes the first phase of the response as YHWH rejects the implied accusation that he has changed.[107] While constituting a perfect parallelism with the denial in 3:6a, the clause in 3:6b ushers in the next stage of the response: the problem of the people is to be found in their chronic disobedience to divine decrees, particularly, bringing all the tithes and offerings for the purpose of running the temple service and caring for the needy.[108]

Moreover, by virtue of its function in connecting the two aspects of YHWH's response to the accusation, the passage under question also brings the significance of 3:8-12 as part of a unified discourse, 2:17-3:12, to the surface (see 4 below for more on this).

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[106] As discussed above (IV.1), some scholars wonder why 3:6-7 is at its current place in Malachi and suggest that it was originally part of 1:2-5. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 178, 155. Many scholars also find it difficult to see the relevance of 3:8-12 being located between two eschatological passages. According to Verhoef, (*Haggai and Malachi,* 298) "this pericope [3:6-12] forms a kind of parenthesis between two prophecies concerning God's judgment (2:17–3:5 and 3:13–21). The semantic domain of this pericope is not eschatology but cult: it concerns the compulsory contributions for the support of the temple staff." Moreover, with the translation of לֹא כְלִיתֶם as 'you are not destroyed,' the relationship of 3:6b to 3:6a and 3:7 hits a problem, with different scholars suggesting various solutions. Proposals include a redactional activity (לֹא is a later addition) or paradox (though YHWH does not change, you are not destroyed: Deutsch, 'Malachi,' 103-4) and temporary delay in the execution of judgment on the part of YHWH (YHWH does not change, but as for you, children of Jacob, you are not destroyed - Glazier-McDonalds, *Malachi*, 180.).

[107] The ironic utterance in 3:1 introduces the first stage of response to 2:17, i.e. 3:2-5 which is a direct attack on the assumption of YHWH's critics concerning their own righteousness and the divine reward thereof.

[108] The passage in Mal 3:8-12 seems to indicate that the underlying motivation for the harsh words against YHWH in Mal 2:17 is primarily economic hardship. However, in view of the importance of tithing in running the cult, it might well be the case that the issue of tithe serves as representative of the general commitment to serving YHWH.

Finally, an ironic understanding of כלה in 3:6b facilitates smoother relationship within the passage itself, i.e., between 3:6a and 3:6b, and between 3:6 and 3:7a.

I have shown above that the passage in Mal 3:6 features an artistic combination of denial (3:6a, 3:6b) and irony (3:6b). In 3:6a YHWH, in response to the attributed allegation in 2.17, denies that he has changed with respect to exercising justice. In 3:6b, he denies that the people are morally good as they have persisted in rebellion. I have argued that such a reading has several advantages. First, the passage acquires fuller relevance. Second, it recognises the poetic beauty of the parallelism between v. 6a and v. 6b. Finally, it solves several coherence issues including the relationship of 3:8-12 to what goes before, i.e. 2:17-3:5.

In the following section, I will summarise the findings of this chapter. I will also demonstrate the significance of the findings for reading Mal 2:17-3:12.

4. Summary and Conclusion

I have argued, above, that the utterances in Mal 3:1 and 3:6 are echoic. I have also argued that this understanding is not just plausible but, in fact, offers a more consistent, comprehensive and satisfactory explanation of issues that other interpretive alternatives would struggle to solve. I will now give a summary of what problems this understanding of the verses solves and how.

First, reading Mal 3:1 as irony helps to explain the relationship between the severe criticism of YHWH in 2:17 and the positive response to it in 3:1. The utterance in 3:1 is not endorsed but rather used to mock the assumption implied in 2:17 that the people protest YHWH's departure.

Second, I have also argued that Mal 3:6-7a is a rejection of the people's assumption of YHWH's moral status as well as theirs. The interpretation of Mal 3:6 as echoic utterances accounts for the suitability of the passage in the discourse. The passage, far from being out of place with the rest of the discourse, helps to link the theme of YHWH's return in 3:1-5 with that of the return of the people in 3:7b-12. This also solves the problem arising from not seeing the relevance of 3:8-12 in the context.

Finally, such understanding enables a coherent reading of the whole passage of Mal 2:17-3:12, which appears to be lacking or elusive in previous works. In 2:17, the people accuse YHWH claiming that he considers evildoers good and is pleased with them. They ask "where is the God of justice?" I have argued that their accusation is specifically about YHWH's rejection of the cult and endorsement of the worship by the nations. The people protest YHWH's decision saying that it is an act of perversion in that he loves evildoers (the nations). They accuse him of changing. I have also shown that this accusation implies that the people assume that they are good.

The following section (Mal 3:1-12) is a two-stage response from YHWH to the people's accusation. The response begins with a defence of YHWH's integrity and a rebuttal, i.e., accusation of the people of persistent rebellion (3:1-7a). I have argued that in 3:1-5, YHWH responds by mocking the utterances of the people and the implication thereof (3:1) and presenting his return that they wish as undesirable, something they should not wish for. Interpreting their complaint as indicative of a desire for his return, he rejects that such desire is either sincere or wise. In 3:6a, he denies that he has changed; he rejects the accusation that he regards evildoers as good, that he delights in them (evildoers) and that he is no more a God of justice. In 3:6b-7a, he denies that the people have ever obeyed him. Thus the three clauses in Mal 3:6-7a conclude the initial stage of response and introduce the next one.

In the second stage of his response, 3:7b-12, YHWH offers a way to resolve the dispute. The passage begins with YHWH urging the people to return to him so that he will return to them: שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְאָשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם "return to me and I will return to you" (3:7b). First, the people need to fulfil their obligation to enable the cult to function (7c-10a). In response to the question בַּמֶּה נָשׁוּב, "how shall we return?" he points out the withholding of tithe (הַמַּעֲשֵׂר) and offering (הַתְּרוּמָה) as areas where they need to change. He tells them that, as a result of withholding what is due him, the whole nation (הַגּוֹי כֻּלּוֹ) is accursed (בַּמְּאֵרָה אַתֶּם נֵאָרִים) (vv. 7c-9).

The fact that they are referred to as הַגּוֹי כֻּלּוֹ (v. 9) is significant. The phrase is usually used of the nations as opposed to Israel and the use here identifies Israel with the pagan nations.[109] According to Glazier-McDonald, the term has a "theologically pejorative nuance" because of the belief in Israel that the religion of the nations is not pleasing to YHWH. Thus it "signals Yahweh's rejection of Israel in view of her cultic misdeeds."[110] The reminder that they are under curse, together with the reference הַגּוֹי כֻּלּוֹ, highlights the theme of rejection is in view in this passage as well.

The people must bring their tithes and offerings to the temple to provide for the need there (v. 10a). Various proposals have been given as to why tithes and offerings are taken up in the development of the discourse. Kaiser, for instance, believes that the focus on withholding tithes and offerings is because it was "simply, a readily provable sin"[111] According to Torrey, it is part of the list of transgressions in 3:5, which is discontinued at 3:6-7 in favour of a more general accusation.[112] Jones notes that the tithes and offerings by which the people robbed YHWH represents "the honour and worship" that they failed to offer (1:6).[113] Jones's interpretation highlights the generalness of the issue along which repentance is urged.

I argue that the fact that the people are asked to repent in this specific way is in line with the cultic nature of the dispute between YHWH and the people of Judah. Specifically, tithes and offerings are singled out as they constitute the necessary provisions for the cult to operate (cf. וִיהִי טֶרֶף בְּבֵיתִי 'there may be food in my house' in v. 10). Hill observes that the call to resume paying tithes and offerings is a plea "for comprehensive renewal of practices" and the offerings were prescribed as per Numbers 18:26 "for the general provision of the central sanctuary."[114] On this ground, fulfilling such a duty can be seen as representing Judah's return to YHWH.

Second, upon their repentance, YHWH will return to his people (10b-12). If the people return, they can be sure of abundant blessings and the removal of curses. They can test,

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[109] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 192; Verhoef, *Haggai and Malachi*, 306.

[110] Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 192.

[111] Kaiser, 'Malachi,' 499.

[112] Torrey, 'The Prophecy of Malachi,' 6.

[113] Jones, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 1962, 201.

[114] Hill, 'Malachi,' 2008, 634. See also Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 155.

prove or try[115] (בחן) to see whether or not YHWH responds to their obedience (v. 10b-11). The idea of testing (v. 10b) is a response to the people's inverted axiom that YHWH delights in evildoers. We have seen that the prophet contended that YHWH has not changed and that the people have themselves to blame and urged them to return (3:1-7a). Now, upon their return, they can test whether or not YHWH is really pleased with the obedient, the morally good. Indeed, he will respond with abundant blessings (v. 10b-c) and the removal of curses (vv. 11) and thus demonstrate that he is delighted in the righteous.

They will be a delightful land (אֶרֶץ חֵפֶץ) and acknowledged as blessed by the nations (v. 12). Note that this time they are referred to as אֶרֶץ "land" (cf. הַגּוֹי כֻּלּוֹ). Not also that the word חֵפֶץ "delightful" is used once again, a powerful allusion to 3:1, 2:17 and 1:10. This time around, they are actually pleasing. It is also remarkable that the nations are mentioned once more, this time witnessing the blessedness of Judah as it is restored to a functional relationship with YHWH.

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[115] *BDB* 103c.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, findings of the thesis will be summarised and points for further research will be suggested. First, the new interpretations of passages argued for in chapter three and chapter four of this thesis will be summarised. This will then be followed by a statement concerning the methodological usefulness of RT in interpreting texts. At the end of each section, issues of interest for further research will be pointed out.

Mal 1:2-5 and Its Discourse Context

This thesis has argued, in chapter three, that Mal 1:2-5 can be read as irony. YHWH's utterances in the passage are attributive, echoic and dissociative. They are more relevant, not as descriptions of a reality, but as echoing thoughts attributed to the people and priests of Judah in order to communicate a dissociative attitude toward those thoughts.

YHWH attributes assumptions and expectations to the people and the priests of Judah. In verse 2, he quotes the assumption that he loves Israel. Likewise, in verses 3-4, assumptions that YHWH hates Edom and expectations that the Edomites will be annihilated are attributed. Finally, in verse 5, the expected jubilation in Israel following the utter destruction of Edom is metarepresented.

YHWH echoes and communicates a dissociative attitude to the thoughts and expectations of the cultic community. He mocks the idea that the people of Israel remain YHWH's favourites, that he invariably rejects Edom while Israel remains a land where God is glorified. The idea is not the object of mockery in itself. It is so because the people hold to it without heeding the need to commit themselves to YHWH. In other words, the people and the priesthood had a wrong conception of their standing with YHWH.

The thesis has also argued that the ironic reading of Mal 1:2-5 is suggested by the following discourse, i.e., Mal 1:6-14. YHWH's dissociative attitude in Mal 1:2-5 is communicated tacitly. The nature of his attitude becomes clear in 1:6-14 where YHWH explicitly distances himself from the assumption that the cultic community is acceptable

to him and instead reveals that they are not pleasing to him and that he does not accept them.

The argument for an ironic reading of Mal 1:2-5 in light of Mal 1:6-14 is presented in three stages. First, it has been demonstrated that there is a strong connection between Mal 1:2-5 and 1:6-14 so that the whole discourse can be read as a unit whereby YHWH's utterances in the former are understood in light of the latter. Several thematic and structural links that strongly suggest continuity have been pointed out. It has thus been shown that the senses of אהב and שׂנא in 1:2, 3 are to be understood as that of cultic acceptability and rejection in 1:6-14 respectively.

Second, the section (1:6-14) has been explored as a discourse in which several utterances are used echoically. In 1:6-8b, YHWH echoes and challenges the assumptions of the priesthood. First, he questions the assumptions of the priesthood that they sincerely regard him with honour as a father or master (1:6a-d). Second, he exposes and rejects the assumptions of the priesthood that their sacrifices are of acceptable standard (1:6e-8b). The utterance in 1:8a, b can be understood as either ironic or echo question. Either way, the assumption represented by the utterance that there was no problem with offering inferior sacrifices (weak or sick animals) is attributed to the priests and rejected. If interpreted as irony, the prophet tacitly distances himself from the assumption; if taken as echo question, he explicitly challenges the validity of such a thought.

In Mal 1:8c-9, YHWH mocks the assumptions of the priesthood using ironic utterances. The prophet mocks the idea of presenting to the governor inferior offerings such as the ones that the priests opt to present to YHWH. Thus he ridicules, even more so, the idea that it was alright to offer such sacrifices to YHWH. He also mocks the assumption that the priests can secure God's favour with their inferior offerings.

In Mal 1:10-11, YHWH denies assumptions that the priests (and the cultic community) and their worship are acceptable to YHWH. YHWH's utterances in Mal 1:10b have been analyzed as echoic denial whereby the prophet communicates that YHWH has rejected both the priesthood and the cult. The assumption that the priesthood and their

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sacrifices are acceptable to YHWH is doubly negated: אֵין־לִי חֵפֶץ בָּכֶם /
וּמִנְחָה לֹא־אֶרְצֶה. YHWH's utterances in 1:10a, 11 offer correction to the negated
assumption: YHWH wishes rather that the temple be shut (10a); he would rather be
worshiped among the nations with pure offerings and reverence.

Third, it was noted that the echoic utterances in 1:6-14 contrast with his utterances in
1:2-5 if the latter is taken as assertions, i.e., that YHWH loves Israel (v. 2), that he hates
Esau and destroys Edom (vv. 3-4) and that Israel glorifies YHWH (v. 5). The apodosis
in each of the conditionals in 1:7c, d questions that the priesthood is actually committed
to honouring YHWH. This contradicts the statement that Israel glorifies YHWH (1:5).
The echoic utterances in 1:8 (as irony or echo question) and 1:9 (irony) ridicule the
assumption that the people of Israel and their priests were really appreciated and their
worship is accepted by YHWH. These utterances in 1:8-9 and the double denial in
1:10b, along with the preceding correction clause in 10a, counter that YHWH loves
Israel (1:2) and the correction clauses in 1:11 stand in contrast with 1:3f including
וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי. The thesis has thus demonstrated that, read in light of 1:6-14,
YHWH's utterances in Mal 1:2-5 are to be understood, not as assertions of facts, but as
an ironic interpretation of the thoughts of the worshipping community of post-exilic
Judah.

Finally, the thesis has shown that reading Mal 1:2-5 as irony explains several
interpretive problems within the passage. First, it enables a coherent reading of the
larger discourse (1:2-14) and thus accounts for the contextual appropriateness of the
pericope itself. Second, the ethical problem involved in reading וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו שָׂנֵאתִי (1:3a)
as an assertion is resolved as in ironic reading the utterance actually serves a rhetorical
purpose of ironic exaggeration. Third, the ironic reading accounts for the significance of
employing the Esau/Edom tradition in Malachi better than previous interpretations do.

Mal 3:1, 6-7a and Its Discourse Context

This thesis has argued, in chapter four, that Mal 3:1, 6-7a can be interpreted as echoic
utterances. Specifically, it has proposed to analyze 3:1 as irony and 3:6a as denial. It has
also suggested that 3:6b can be analyzed as both ironic and denial. Furthermore, it has

pointed out that the clause in 3:7a can be understood as a corrective clause in relation to 3:6b. These echoic utterances are part of the response given to previous utterances in Mal 2:17c-e.

By accusing YHWH of loving evildoers, the people speaking in 2:17c-e are protesting YHWH's decision to reject them in favour of the nations in 1:10-11. The people regard the nations as evildoers. Their view of the nations means that they regard themselves as righteous. Therefore, they interpret YHWH's decision to reject Judah in favour of the nations as a change in his character as a just God because, in their view, he now loves evildoers. He is no longer just as he is supposed to be. The protest against YHWH's departure implies a will to have him back.

The response to the protest is given in two stages: in 3:1-7a, YHWH defends himself against the implied accusation that he has changed and accuses the people of persistent rebellion. In 3:7b-12, he calls on the people to return to him so that he can return and bless them. YHWH's coming (3:1-5) is concerned with his return to the cultic community.

YHWH's initial response, i.e., the promise to come is not a genuine promise but an ironic interpretation of the people's protest against his rejection of them. He mocks their "desire for him" and their "delight in his messenger". The following verses, particularly 3:2, 5, indicate that his return would not be desirable given the moral condition of the community. The statements about finding someone who will bring pure offerings and the scenario of YHWH's delight in the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem (3:3, 4) are rather hypothetical and only show that the people are not yet ready for YHWH's return. Thus 3:1 mocks the sincerity of the people's interest in YHWH's return thereby vindicating him with regard to his earlier decision to reject them (cf. 1:10-11).

The thesis has argued in support of the view that in 3:6a YHWH denies that he has changed. Even though the denial is already noted, the interpretation proposed by this thesis comes as a result of reading the whole discourse of 2:17-3:12 and a fresh understanding of the critical utterances of the people in 2:17. Moreover, this thesis has sought to analyze denial in terms of RT notion of echoic utterances as communicating attitudes to someone else's thoughts and utterances.

The thesis has also argued that 3:6b can be interpreted as a denial and irony. The part of the utterance that falls under the scope of the negation operator לֹא is a denial of the claim that the people of Judah are righteous, a claim that is implied in the utterances of the people in 2:17c-e. The clause in 6b also involves irony. The negation is done in such a way that it sounds as though YHWH is commending the people. This effect is achieved by using the ambiguous word כלה that is also related to the verb שׁנה in 3:6a. The structural parallelism with 3:6a also creates an expectation that the clause is favourable to the people. The ironic meaning of the word כלה is only recovered after the reader has interpreted the following utterance in 3:7a: they have always turned away from YHWH. The utterance in 3:7a corrects the claim that the people are righteous. It asserts that they have always turned away from YHWH and his decrees.

The second stage of the response is concerned with a call to repentance (3:7b-12). YHWH will return if the people return to him (7b). The issue of tithing is singled out for its importance in running the cult. The withholding of tithes resulted in curses as did the offering of inferior animals (3:8-9; cf. 1:14; 2:2). If the people return, particularly if they bring the tithes due God, the curses will be undone and blessings restored. By returning to YHWH, the people can test him to see whether he is indeed delighted in the righteous (3:10-12). The noun חֵפֶץ in 3:12 echoes חפץ in 1:10; 2:17; 3:1. Now the attitude is that of approval. YHWH will be pleased with his people. He is pleased in the righteous ones, not in evildoers. The term "the nations" in 3:12 is significant in that it links the passage to 1:10-11. YHWH will return to the people and the nations will call them "blessed".

The Big Picture: Reading Malachi as a Unified Discourse

This thesis has explored the possibility of reading each of the passages in Mal 1:2-14 and 2:17-3:12 as a unit. It has suggested that the subject matter for Mal 1:2-14 is YHWH's rejection of the cult, his turning away from the cultic community because of their failure to honour him. It has also proposed that Mal 2:17-3:12 can be interpreted as concerned with the return of YHWH to the community on the basis of their repentance.

The intervening passage (2:1-16), which is a monologue, except for a brief question from the people in 2:14, offers warnings (2:1-3) and details failed covenant expectations and their consequences (2:4-16). But how this section exactly fits with the scheme pursued in this thesis requires further study.

The final section (Mal 3:13-24) seems to be dealing with the same issue of YHWH's coming that 2:17-3:5 is concerned with. Why we have two passages with similar subject deserves closer attention. Particularly, the place of this passage in the interpretive framework proposed in this thesis requires more study.

The Heuristic Value of RT: The Notions of Relevance and Echo

One of the contributions of this thesis is the application of aspects of RT to the interpretation of biblical texts. The thesis has particularly shown how the notions of relevance, irony, echoic questions and denials are useful in this regard. First, the notion of relevance has been used to constrain the meaning of texts under investigation. It has also been used to explain how communicators adapt their communication and organise information with respect to relevance. Particularly, the thesis has shown that garden-path and parallelism is used to enhance relevance. From the audience's point of view, it has shown that relevance guides the audience in interpreting both utterances and organization of information in discourse. Thus the thesis has shown that sections that previous interpretations regard as disparate can actually be read as a coherent unit.

Furthermore, the idea of relevance has been used to account for problems that readers intuitively recognise: the search for relevance means that those problems induce more processing effort for higher cognitive or emotive effect. Some of the problems dealt with in this thesis are: the uniqueness of the use of the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5, particularly, the tension between the significance of Edom in the text and the ethical issue surrounding the way the tradition is employed; the role of the nations in Mal 1:11, 14; how the positive response in Mal 3:1 relates to the highly accusatory speech in 2:17; how the issue of tithing can be read as part of the question of the coming of YHWH etc.

Second, the thesis has also demonstrated the significance of the RT notion of interpretive use of utterances. Interpretive utterances are used to interpret other

utterances or thoughts. As such, they create a complex relationship within a discourse and between the discourse and related external context. The RT concept of interpretive utterances has been used in this thesis in exploring various passages in Malachi along with their respective possible source utterances or thoughts resulting in fresh understandings of passages studied.

For instance, the use of the Esau/Edom tradition in Mal 1:2-5, which has been treated in this passage as interpretive, was previously seen as descriptive. The recognition of the interpretive nature of the passage helps to see that it is related to other representations it interprets, such as the version of the tradition in other texts in the HB. Such recognition also helps to understand how specifically the passage is related to its source utterances or thoughts.

Similarly other interpretive utterances have been identified and their relationship to their possible sources has been established: denials in 1:10-11 and 3:6 are responses to the thoughts of the priests (cf. 1:6-8) and the critics of YHWH in 2:17c-e respectively; echoic questions in 1:6b, c, are responses to Israel's assumptions and those in 7b, 8a, b are rejoinders to their preceding utterances whereas 2:17e is a retort to the denial in 1:10-11.

While the more general notion of interpretive use is useful on its own, the echoic account of certain utterances as attributive, echoic and attitudinal is particularly insightful. Such explanation has been shown to be helpful in identifying possible sources of texts investigated (attribution) and the rationale for their use (echoic, attitudinal) in the contexts analyzed. This has, in turn, helped to not only see that a text is related to other texts in or outside the discourse context but also identify the specific nature of the relationship. This has had a significant implication for interpretation.

For example, the notion of denial as an interpretive use of someone else's thought or utterances has brought out the connection of texts analyzed as such in this thesis to their respective contexts as negating rejoinders (cf. Mal 3:6a to 2:17). Previous understandings of this text as descriptive did not allow for such a connection. Likewise, echoic questions, such as the ones in Mal 1:8, have been analyzed as disputations of assumptions or previous utterances. The same can be said of ironies in 1:9 which are

part of the debate between YHWH and the priesthood in 1:6-14. Thus, the interconnectedness of the utterances in the passages investigated has been brought to light in an unprecedented way. Finally, the RT echoic account of irony has been shown to be useful in identifying the phenomenon much more clearly than the traditional definition does. It particularly clarifies the usual confusion of verbal irony, which is intended, with situational irony, which is unintentional.

This thesis was concerned with echoic metarepresentations in Malachi. However, there are a number of instances of non-echoic metarepresentations used in the book including warnings (2:2), threats (2:3), imperatives (2:16, 3:7b) and promises (3:11). A closer look at these and similar cases of interpretive utterances can be productive in terms of contributions to understanding Malachi and testing the usefulness of RT in biblical interpretation.

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