

ERIK WAALER

The Use of the
Old Testament in
Matthew 1–4

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

595

Mohr Siebeck

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*To Rollaug,
my dear wife*

Preface

The recontextualization of the Old Testament in the New Testament is often a crux to the ordinary reader of the Bible, but it is also a crux to the educated reader. The scholarly community is generally deeply versed in a particular form of recontextualization that fits with their own scholarly work, a mode that is very modern and far removed from the way recontextualization was perceived of in Second Temple Judaism. This study aims to reclaim the mode of recontextualization current in first-century Judah and Galilee as it is reflected in the Gospel of Matthew.

My gratitude goes to NLA University College for granting me leave of absence and support, to all my colleagues in the national study group “text meeting text” and to the seminar group “Intertextuality in the New Testament” at the SBL annual conference.

I am also deeply grateful to my wife, Rollaug. Her support and love are of immense importance to me.

Bergen, 30/3/2023

Erik Waaler

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Abbreviations and References

The major part of the abbreviations follows the instruction for contributors in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (*JBL* 117[3]:560–579). Some abbreviations, not present in *JBL*, follow the system in the *OTP* 1. If not otherwise noted, references to the Bible are from the *NIV*, the Apocrypha from the *RSV*, the Pseudepigrapha from the *OTP*, Qumran texts from the *DSSSE* and Philo and Josephus from the *LCL*. Articles in well-known reference works such as the *TDNT*, *TDOT*, *APOT*, *OTP* and *NIDNTT* are normally not included in the reference list, but the authors of the articles are usually named in the text.

Introduction

This study began as an inductive study aiming to 1) deconstruct our perception of what happens when a text is reused and to identify the factors at work (chapters two to four) and 2) to apply this aggregated knowledge in the interpretation of texts in the Gospel of Matthew (from chapter five onwards).

The inductive study has led to the creation of certain hypotheses that to a certain extent are discussed by a hypothetic-deductive approach in the text. This is particularly evident in the first part.

It is my contention that our approach to reused text is much too focused on the identification of so-called quotations, allusion and echoes; categories that in my opinion are vague. I suggest that we speak of recontextualization and that we focus on describing the many different factors that are at work when a text is recontextualized, that is when parts of one text are merged into the flow of another text. This part of my study has developed over time, starting with four main perspectives on reused text and evolving into a great number of factors. This part of the study starts from a philosophical approach to text and ends with a more practical and diversified approach to recontextualization. By recontextualization, I mean the reuse of parts of one text in the body of another text.

For the application of this material, I have chosen some texts from the first part of the Gospel of Matthew. I study these passages, not with a main focus on how close they are to the Hebrew or Greek text of the Old Testament, as is the main focus of, for example, Krister Stendahl's monumental book: *The School of St. Matthew*. The focus is rather on the interpretative changes that are done to the older text by the author of a later text in correspondence with the latter person's cultural milieu in general and with his readers in particular. It is my impression that this rather different perspective brings new insight into the exegesis.

After the introduction, the second chapter focuses on the theoretical problems behind recontextualisation, the issue of intertextuality. To grasp this concept, one must discuss problems such as:

- 1) Synchrony and diachrony.
- 2) The relationship between the subjective, the objective and the intersubjective.
- 3) The relationship between text and context.

My argument focuses on the intersubjective and the synchronic. Based on the intersubjective and culturally framed perception of reality, I focus on the common and culturally conditioned perception of the text within its original context. Despite the presence of noise, I argue that validity in interpretation might be attained by use of knowledge of the culture and the language in question. Modern interpretations are to be evaluated based on their knowledge of and sensitivity to the culture in question and their adaptation of that culture in their interpretation of the text. The last part of the chapter discusses dominant texts and *sensus plenior*. The fact that the Law, the Prophets and the Scriptures are dominant texts and that parts of these texts were well known to the Jews, makes these texts function intertextually in a particular manner. *Sensus plenior* is a modern concept. However, it seems evident that Second Temple Judaism in some sense had a similar concept in mind. This is related to two issues: 1) they perceived of God as speaking through the prophets. This makes the voices in the text more complex. 2) Some of them perceived themselves as having access to secret knowledge in a prophetic way. They considered themselves able to see a hidden meaning of a text that was not visible to others. Inspired speech and inspired interpretation are part of recontextualisation of the Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism. Whether or not we agree with these concepts there is a need to address them as both issues are evident in this culture.

The third and fourth chapters discuss the different factors at work in recontextualization of text, focusing first on the primary factors ‘reference formula’, ‘verbatimness’ and ‘intent’, but secondly also on different modes of interpretative change and continuity. This leads to a deconstruction of the current perception of recontextualization, and to a reconstruction of a more diverse approach to the problem at hand.

The fifth chapter discusses different modes of explicit reference in Second Temple Judaism.

The following chapters apply the generated knowledge to certain texts from the first chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. In doing so, only parts of the generated material from the earlier chapters are used. This is followed by inductive studies of how the material was used by Matthew’s author. In this way different parts of the earlier chapters are used.

The goal is twofold: 1) to obtain a better understanding of what it is that happens when a text is recontextualized. 2) To study a few texts from Matthew to see how this kind of knowledge influences our interpretation of the text. The second part gives examples rather than being comprehensive.

Chapter 1

Intertextuality¹

Being a relatively new perspective, the content and meaning of the term *intertextuality* are by no means self-evident. Various definitions have been presented since Kristeva established the concept of intertextuality in modern literary theory.² Kristeva herself describes it in the following way:

The term *inter-textuality* denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of “study of sources”, we prefer the term transposition because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic – of enunciative and denotative positionality.³

Kristeva distinguishes between denotative words and ambivalent words. A denotative word is a word of the author which does not signify anything else than itself and its object. When such words are used by a character and are accepted by the author without any additional meaning, they are still denotative. “It is the third instance; however, the writer can use somebody else’s words, giving it a new meaning while retaining the meaning it already had. The result is a word with two significations: it becomes *ambivalent*.”⁴

Kristeva sees the *phenotext*, the text currently under scrutiny, as a web of other texts, “... as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.”⁵ Culler contends that on the practical level Kristeva

¹ Some material in this chapter are re-worked versions of chapter 2.6 of my doctoral dissertation (Waalder 2008).

² See Riffaterre (1990: 56–57); Still and Worton (1990: 18, 22); Fewell (1992: 17); Penchansky (1992: 77–78).

³ Kristeva (1984: 59–60).

⁴ Kristeva (1987b: 43). According to Still and Worton, Kristeva’s intertextuality corresponds to Bakhtin’s dialogism, which means “speech which serves two speakers’ intentions, such as those attributed to novelist and those to character ...” (Still and Worton 1990: 16). This is opposed to Bakhtin’s monologism: “Writers of literature can attempt artificially to strip language of others’ intentions, a unifying project which Bakhtin calls monologism or poetry. ... Kristeva takes up Bakhtin’s chain of binary oppositions, but she emphasises that both the monologic and the dialogic poles are to be found in any text” (Still and Worton 1990: 15).

⁵ Kristeva (1987b: 37). Admittedly, the use of intertextuality in biblical scholarship is eclectic. There is tension between the intertextual perception of text and biblical scholarship

works with traceable intertextual links rather than the larger cultural web or “the general discursive space”.⁶ She leaves little space for anonymous intertexts.⁷ Bloom goes further in the same direction ending up with one major intertext, the “romantic father.”⁸ R. Barthes and J. Culler work primarily with untraceable intertexts.⁹ According to Culler the risk of intertextuality is to end up doing source studies or naming “... pre-texts on grounds of interpretive convenience.”¹⁰ Apparently, there is a distinction between Kristeva and Bloom on one side and Barthes on the other side. This distinction concerns the interest

(see Hatina 1999: 30–33). Holter describes the tension between a synchronic and a diachronic use of intertextuality, arguing that his use of the term is inspired by, but not equivalent to, Kristeva’s use of the term (Holter 2003: 14–15, especially n. 25). Like Kristeva, he focuses on the speaking subject (Kristeva 1987a: 27). For a similar point of view see Thiselton (1992: 129), contra Still and Worton (1990: 1–2, 17), Culler (1981: 106–09), Beal (1992: 30–31), Miscall (1992: 44) and Lack (1990: 130). In his discussion of the thanksgiving psalms from Qumran, Schuller describes some texts in a related manner: “These three are clearly not identical, but more than fifteen phrases, often in the same order, are shared by two or all three texts. Perhaps we are seeing a ‘floating text’ that was incorporated in a number of different contexts ...” (Schuller 1994: 161–62).

⁶ Culler (1981: 106). Beal, however, suggests that “On first impression, Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality, via dialogism, delegitimizes any diachronic hermeneutical interpretation of relationships between biblical texts in terms of intratextuality [Lindbeck 1984] or inner-biblical exegesis [Fishbane 1985]” (Beal 1992: 30). As implied in the quote, he does not stick with this description (cf. Beal 1992: 31). This illustrates the evasiveness of the term “intertextuality”. Miscall calls it “a covering term for all the possible relations that can be established between texts” (Miscall 1992: 44). See further (Beal 1992: 31).

⁷ “Kristeva’s procedure is instructive because it illustrates the way in which the concept of intertextuality leads the critic who wishes to work with it to concentrate on cases that put in question the general theory. A criticism based on the contention that meaning is made possible by a general, anonymous intertextuality tries to justify the claim by showing how in particular cases ‘a text works by absorbing and destroying at the same time the other texts of the intertextual space’ and is happiest and most triumphant when it can identify particular pretexts with which the work is indubitably wrestling” (Culler 1981: 107). Still and Worton (1990: 17) are mistaken in their reference to Culler (1981: 104). Lack argues that the theories and the practice of Kristeva do not coincide: “... a difficulty arises when ‘the absorption of a multiplicity of texts (of meanings) in the poetic message’ is illustrated with citations from *Poésies* that actually articulate only two texts: the appropriated pre-text and its correction. Hence the closest Kristeva comes to a close reading of *Poésies* in fact evokes not the ‘multiple textual space’ of Kristeva’s intertextuality but a closed arena where two combatants, or their texts, are, as the theorist of a different tradition might say, locked in poetic warfare” (Lack 1990: 130; cf. Still and Worton 1990: 17).

⁸ Culler (1981: 109).

⁹ Culler (1981: 108). Culler himself seems to disagree with Bloom (Culler 1981: 109) and to agree with Barthes: “We may or may not find in earlier poems sentences similar to those presupposed; that is in no way crucial. They function as already read; they present themselves as already read by virtue of the simple act that they are presupposed” (Culler 1981: 114).

¹⁰ Culler (1981: 109).

of the critics in the writing subject¹¹ or the reader.¹² It might have been caused by Kristeva's interest in psychoanalysis and Barthes' interaction with reader response theory. Kristeva's notion of intertextuality may be seen as a return to a focus on the *speaking subject*.¹³ However, it is not the speaking subject in the romantic sense, but rather the partly conscious and subconscious mosaic of a psychological subject.¹⁴ It is a "subject-in-process (*sujet en procès*), but a subject nevertheless."¹⁵ The distinction between traceable and untraceable sources

¹¹ "In my view, a critique of this 'semiology of systems' and of its phenomenological foundation is possible only if it starts from a theory of the speaking subject ... language as an act carried out by a subject" (Kristeva 1987a: 27).

¹² Culler contends: "Literary studies experienced what Barthes called the death of the author but almost simultaneously it discovered the reader, for in an account of the semiotics of literature someone like the reader is needed to serve as center" (Culler 1981: 38). See further Barthes (1994: 49–54), Stene-Johansen (1994: 13) and Still and Worton (1990: 20–21). Culler quotes Barthes: "... The *I* that approaches the text is itself already a plurality of other texts, of infinite or, more precisely, lost codes (whose origin is lost)" (Culler 1981: 102, with ref. to Barthes 1970: 16). Still and Worton speak of two axes of intertextuality: "... texts entering via authors (who are, first, readers) and texts entering via readers (co-producers)..." (Still and Worton 1990: 2, cf. p. 1). For Kristeva this is a matter of focus: "What allows a dynamic dimension to structuralism is his (*i.e.* Bakhtin's) conception of the 'literary word' as *an intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context" (Kristeva 1987b: 36; cf. Still and Worton 1990: 16–17). Biblical studies tend to focus on reader oriented intertextuality: "In this article the term 'intertext' will be used to denote the whole of texts which *in the mind of the reader* are related to a specific text" (Luttikhuisen 1989: 117, orig. italics; cf. Vorster 1989: 26).

¹³ "In my view, a critique of this 'semiology of systems' and of its phenomenological foundations is possible only if it starts from a theory of meaning which must necessarily be a theory of the speaking subject ... the rehabilitation of the Cartesian conception of language as an *act* carried out by a *subject*" (Kristeva 1987a: 27, orig italics). "Julia Kristeva follows Barthes and Derrida in viewing texts as expanding unfinished, textures. But the system *also* entails the 'speaking subject'" (Thiselton 1992: 129).

¹⁴ Kristeva (1987a: 28): "... a theory of the speaking subject as a divided subject (conscious/unconscious)." Kristeva's thinking is influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis (cf. Kristeva 1984: 59; Roudiez 1984; Moi 1987: 12ff). Marxist ideology seems to be represented as well: "Kristeva's intertextuality suggests, in line with Marxist sociology, that meaning is not *given* nor produced by a transcendental ego. Indeed the transcendental ego is itself an effect *produced* in a social context" (Still and Worton 1990: 17). Riffaterre compares intertextuality to the unconscious: "...the most important component of the literary work of art, and indeed the key to the interpretation of its significance, should be found outside of that work, beyond its margins, in the intertext. In conclusion, the concept of combinatory connective explains why the recovery of the intertext is an imperative and inevitable process ... Thus the intertext is to the text what the unconscious is to consciousness" (Riffaterre 1990: 76–77). Intertextuality works with both conscious and unconscious use of older texts.

¹⁵ Moi (1987: 13). Moi continues the argument: "We find her carrying out once again a difficult balancing act between a position which would deconstruct subjectivity and identity

must be maintained. Apparently, Kristeva's approach is more fruitful for biblical exegesis than that of Barthes.¹⁶ The nature of a source is important, particularly if the source is an authoritative religious text such as the Old Testament.¹⁷ We have chosen to call such traceable sources *archetexts*.

1.1 Intertextuality and the New Testament

Richard B. Hays is credited for introducing intertextuality to New Testament scholarship. His methodological scheme may be summarized in seven points:

1) availability, 2) volume, 3) recurrence, 4) thematic coherence, 5) historical plausibility, 6) history of interpretation, 7) satisfaction.¹⁸

The focus is whether intertextuality takes place. This is in line with much of earlier scholarship. Reformulation of the questions makes this apparent:

- 1) Is the source available to be used?¹⁹
- 2) Is there sufficient intertextuality for it to be heard?
- 3) Does the intertextuality fit into the argumentative strategy of the phenotext?
- 4) Is the intertextuality intended and could it be perceived by the audience?
- 5) Is the use of text plausible from a historical point of view?
- 6) Are the tertiary scholarly readers confident that this is intertextuality?

altogether, and one that would try to capture these entities in an essentialist or humanist mould." The focus on the author is set in a larger cultural context that she adopted from Russian formalists: "Bakhtin was one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structures do not simply exist but are generated in relation to another structure. What allows a dynamic dimension to structuralism is his conception of the 'literary word' as an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context" (Kristeva 1987b: 35–36; cf. Still and Worton 1990: 16).

¹⁶ Kittang concludes that the term intertextuality "... has its most important heuristic function by allowing an analysis of how the literary work ("diktverket") is always woven into the historical and social contingent contexts ("meningssammenhenger") of which it forms a part" (my transl., Kittang 1976: 51–52).

¹⁷ A known intertext has strong influence on later interpretations of a phenotext: "... a text stands to the reader for an intertext, creating in her or his mind an equivalent sign system. The interpretant intertext embodies that system and keeps it in store for all future readers as a written guarantee that they will all end up with the same interpretation" (Riffaterre 1990: 70).

¹⁸ Waaler (2008: 29–30, with ref. to Hays 1989: 21–31).

¹⁹ "... analyses of diachronic echo are possible only when the chronological ordering of different voices is known" (Hays 1989: 30).

The last question may be divided into two questions: is the interpretation in line with previous scholarship? Does it provide scholarly satisfaction? The questions above can be summarized by the following question: is intertextuality happening or not?

In his work on 1 Corinthians, Rosner has a similar line of proofs: “(1) verbal agreement, (2) recurrence, (3) tradition indicators, (4) intermediary stage/channel of reception, (5) thematic coherence, and (6) alternative sources.”²⁰ These factors have a similar focus on whether intertextuality is happening.

The focus on identification of intertextuality is not the only question raised in discussions of intertextuality. The methodology, developed by Hays and Rosner, gives less help to understand what it is that is happening. The focus is mainly on whether it is a genuine case of intertextuality or not. This methodological problem leads to implied rather than explicit methodologies in scholarly work based on Hays’ work:

Wagner’s approach is answered primarily on looking for the exact verbal correspondences between Paul’s text in Rom 9:1–13 and the OT, even if a full citation may not necessarily be present. On occasion, when an intertextual connection is identified without the verbal correspondences, such as when Wagner sees the intertextual connection between Moses’ intercession for the Israelites (Ex 32:32) and Paul’s pleading with God in Rom 9:3, the methodology is not explained. Otherwise, in much of his examination of the intertextual connections, the close verbal and syntactical correspondence between the text of the OT and Paul’s epistle (an important criterion in Hays’ approach) is one overriding consideration...²¹

The question about whether intertextuality is happening often leads to a focus on sources, original text, *Vorlage* and the identification of which source is closest to the phenotext, the LXX or the MT. Behind this lies an overemphasis on the identification of verbal parallels. Traditionally it is very important to identify which are quotations and which are allusions. This kind of language has had a vast impact on New Testament scholarship. Hays’ version extends this to include echoes, which is to be preferred. However, the focus of Hays’ methodological scheme is still on the issue: “Is it going on? Is it there? How close is the secondary phenotext to the original archetext?” In our opinion, the main question is different from this. We would like to ask: How is a text changed when it is recontextualized? The focus of our method should be on the identification of *how* exegetes of the Second Temple period employ Scripture and interpret Scripture. These perspectives come more to life in studies of particular texts such as texts by Josephus and Philo, the Qumran texts, the Pseudepigrapha, the Apocrypha and the Old Testament. Particularly in the study of non-Biblical texts, there are numerous examples of a practical description of inter-

²⁰ Waaler (2008: 30, n. 159, with ref. to Rosner 1994: 19).

²¹ Wee (2012: 7).

textuality that are at significant variance with what the modern scholarly community would consider appropriate. This kind of material demands the development of new theories, which is the main focus of the following sections.

1.2 Intertextuality: Synchrony and Diachrony

As with all other perspectives on literature, intertextuality may be used both in a synchronic and in a diachronic perspective. Sometimes these two perspectives are presented as separate alternatives. Scholars might describe their own study of texts as either synchronic or diachronic.

Contrary to a conception popular among biblical critics, synchrony shares with diachrony a significant side or dimension of history. ... The popular identification of synchrony with non-historical approaches is observed in the history of structuralism in general. Outside of biblical scholarship, however, there one finds in the structuralist tradition frequent reminders of the historical orientation of the synchrony/diachrony dialectic, against the common misconception.²²

Naming it ‘dialectic’ implies that the synchronic and diachronic perspectives may be seen as separate. Secondly, it is not always obvious what these two terms are taken to mean. We will start with the second issue. Saussure describes the difference as follows:

Synchronic linguistics will be concerned with logical and psychological connexions between coexisting items constituting a system, as perceived by the same collective consciousness. *Diachronic linguistics* on the other hand will be concerned with connexions between sequences of items not perceived by the same collective consciousness, which replace one another without themselves constituting a system.²³

The phrase “connexion between coexisting items” makes the term synchrony historical in the basic sense of the word:

By ‘diachronic’ linguistics Saussure means the study of language from the point of view of its *historical evolution* over a period of time. By ‘synchronic’ linguistics he means ‘the relations of co-existing things ... from which the intervention of time is excluded ... the science of *language-states (hats de langue)* ... *Synchrony* and *diachrony* designate respectively a language-state and an evolutionary phase.’ Saussure’s point is not, as is occasionally thought, that one of these methods is right and the other wrong, but that the two methods are fundamentally *different*, and perform different tasks. Certainly of the two, synchronic linguistics has priority both

²² Hong (2013: 524).

²³ Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. Roy Harris; ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlingere); La Salle, IL: open Court, 1986, p. 98. As quoted by Hong (2013: 522).

in importance and in sequence of application. But as long as the two methods are kept distinct, each has its own role to play.²⁴

This definition of synchronic linguistics is a historical perspective, a representation of text meaning as it appears within a particular historical and cultural setting of a particular language act.²⁵

It is not as if 'synchronic' necessarily describes the investigation of the language of "our" time. This is probably a widely spread misconception, but one may very well investigate a historical phase within the historic development of a language in a synchronic manner, as long as one is within the borders that are drawn for the period in question.²⁶

In reader oriented literary theory, however, the term 'synchronic' is sometimes used with a somewhat different meaning, with focus on the creation of meaning by the modern reader of the text.

Fish later backed off from his claims for affective stylistic priority because they conflicted with his new belief ... that interpretation actually precedes (rather than follows from) the reader's confrontation with a given text, and that readers consequently make the texts they read.²⁷

This newly created text of Fish is in essence a post-text. In this approach there is, I suggest, an overemphasis on the subjective side of the experience of texts. The background of this approach lies in a new perspective on the subjectivity of perception as such and a new perspective on the relationship between experience and truth, making truth dependent on our encounter with the object:

²⁴ Thiselton (1977: 80, with reference to F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, pp. 80–81; cf. *Cours de linguistique generale*, p. 177–8).

²⁵ "The emphasis on synchrony rather than diachrony and the system of language (*langue*) rather than its use (*parole*) changed the focus of the study of linguistics from the evolutionary oriented study of particular instances of language to the study of the language system as it exists at a particular moment in time" (McKnight 1988: 117). "Meaning inevitably derives from the general social system of the speakers of a language" (Malina 1993: 2). "Our task as readers, then, includes imaginatively entering the alien socio-linguistic world of the text" (Pogoloff 1992: 76). Culler's perspective is similar in that it speaks of a discursive space: "... general discursive space that makes a text intelligible" (Culler 1981: 106). He takes this in a general sense, which implies the analysis of a system without respect to time (Culler 1981: 30–31).

²⁶ Gullichsen (1990: 29).

²⁷ Kennedy and Selden (2004 [1995]: 377). Freyne describes Culler in a similar way: "In contrast to Culler's ahistorical approach we propose to examine the rhetorical or pragmatic presuppositions of genre in relation to situation, with the distinct focus of the Graeco-Roman situation in view. Without such a cultural focus distortions can occur all too easily as discursive practices vary from one culture to another, even within a particular genre and despite structural similarities that may be detected in a trans-cultural approach that attempts to be all embracing" (Freyne 1989: 84).

By making everything into ‘experiences’, science makes everything relative: There are no absolute duties, no absolute responsibilities; nothing may be claimed as universals, because everything is experience of ‘truth’; thus no truth, but only more or less interesting-, valuable- and nice experiences.²⁸

Skjervheim compares this perspective to *aestheticism* and *psychologism*, as opposed to *idealism* and *materialism*.²⁹ He further argues that the main problem is the Cartesian dualism, the contrast between “... on one hand the mathematical structured world, *res extensa*, and on the other hand the thinking object, *res cogitans*, soul or spirit”.³⁰ With reference to Descartes he says:

What has to be defeated is the Cartesian dualism.³¹

The problem is that an overemphasis on the subjectivity of knowledge (in psychologism and historicism) ends in scepticism, and that “... scepticism annuls itself as soon as it claims to be true.”³²

Scepticism, this time concerning our access to the past meaning of a text, is part of the background that frames the pure version of the reader-response approach to texts. Such reader-response oriented synchronic approaches have sometimes been met with opposition in the exegetical literature:

It seems to me that modern synchronic approaches in biblical studies extend far beyond the mere problem of the given versus the restored ‘text’. ... These advances (sometimes rather than retrogressions) toward the synchronic, seem to emerge from the post-modern approaches that defy ‘one truth’, ‘one interpretation’, or ‘one story’, but rather centre on the present ‘text’ and, even more, on the modern ‘reader’.³³

As we have seen, synchronic interpreters – with an extreme reader-oriented perspective – do sometimes argue that the reader creates the meaning in the act of reading a ‘pre-text’. In his seminal article on the issue, Hong describes this group in the following manner:

... [a] radical reader-response readings that attend to the POST-T level (*i.e.* the post-text level) with a more aggressive focus given to the axis of reader. The particular reader that these readings follow is not the implied reader reconstructed out of the text. It is the ideological POST-T READER (*i.e.* post-texts reader), whether it be a feminist reader, a deconstructionist reader, a postcolonial reader, or any reader whose engagement in meaning production is not only acknowledged but actively pursued. Fundamentally, the text these readers read is not the same text as was read by the original readers. Though the two are identical in their physical value,

²⁸ Larsen (1954); as quoted by Skjervheim (1964: 37, my transl.).

²⁹ Skjervheim (1964: 38, 87).

³⁰ Skjervheim (1964: 43, 96).

³¹ Skjervheim (1964: 46).

³² Skjervheim (1964: 56–58).

³³ (Talshir 2007: 1–2). This article is worth reading. Its attempt to undermine one-sided synchrony is well written. At times, her claims of diachronic development, composition and structure might not be as self-evident as she assumes. As the article covers a vast area of OT scholarship, it would have been impossible to be comprehensive.

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