Deixis Variation as a Literary Device in Ezekiel:
Utilizing an Oft Neglected Linguistic Feature in Exegesis

by R. Andrew Compton

Introduction

THIS PAPER AIMS to promote attention to the role of personal deixis in the exegesis of biblical texts. Deixis is a linguistic phenomenon, derived from the Greek word δείκνυμι ("to point, to indicate"), consisting of words that have no semantic content in and of themselves but instead point to other words in their literary or discourse context. It is exemplified, according to Stephen C. Levinson, in "the use of demonstratives, first and second person pronouns, tense, specific time and place adverbs like *now* and *here*, and a variety of other grammatical features tied directly to the circumstances of utterance."[1] Words like "he," "they," "this," and even "you" in biblical texts require readers to properly identify the corresponding referents within a text, a seemingly simple task that is often hindered by a number of textual factors.[2]

Attention to deixis is fundamental to exegesis, not simply to avoid misunderstanding a text's message, but in order to understand the shape and emphasis of a given passage. Variations in deixis often signal nuances and cue reader expectations not available through other textual features. Not everyone, however, is convinced that deictic shifts are exegetically significant. For example, the preface to the 1984 edition of the New International Version states: "And though the Hebrew writers often shifted back and forth between first, second and third personal pronouns without change of antecedent, this translation often makes them uniform, in accordance with English style and without the use of footnotes."[3] The Committee on Bible Translation, believing that this grammatical feature is without significant

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1. Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics,* Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 54.

2. A study of demonstrative pronouns in New Testament Greek will reveal some of the exegetical challenges in play. For examples, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 325-35.

3. The NIV Committee on Bible Translation, cited from "Preface" in *New International Version Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible,* ed. Richard L. Pratt Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), xiv.

meaning, did not think it necessary to consistently preserve the deixis of person in its English translation, nor even to alert readers to places where it translates the Hebrew text differently. Is deixis truly as benign as they claim?

In this paper, I argue that unexpected shifts in deixis contribute to the literary shape of the biblical text and should ordinarily be read as intentional, poetical devices that grammatically highlight aspects of the text's message. Though this feature is not unique to Ezekiel, this prophetic books exhibits an unprecedented literary quality. According to Ellen F. Davis: "Ezekiel greatly exceeded his predecessors in the degree to which he exploited the potential inherent in writing."[4] Thus Ezekiel is an ideal foray into this literary inquiry.

The program of this paper is as follows: First, I examine how higher critical scholarship has traditionally treated variation in deixis. Second, I examine shifts in deixis in other ancient Near Eastern literature. Third, I consider the range of roles linguists have observed played by deixis. Fourth, I observe how deixis has been applied recently to the books of Proverbs and Psalms. And finally, I trace number and gender in pronouns, pronominal suffixes, and verbal forms, in Ezekiel 6, 13, 20, and 23, passages selected for their exhibition of deictic usage and variation.

1. Evidence Bearing on the Inquiry

1.1 Higher Critical Approach to Deixis Variation

Viewing a shift in deixis as an intentional literary and rhetorical strategy is not a practice shared by all in biblical studies. Recent work in the academic guild has begun to treat unexpected grammatical forms as potential examples of "expressive choice" or "marked usage" by the biblical writers.[5] Many, however, still default to viewing these either as errors in the Masoretic Text (especially when the ancient versions have different readings) or as signs of literary growth and diachrony.[6]

In a 1967 article on Deuteronomy 1-4, Henri Cazelles provides a classic example of using grammatical shifts to reconstruct the text's redactional growth.[7] Examining

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4. Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy,* LHBOTS 78 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 39.

5. These terms are from E.J. Revell, whose work we will take up below. See E.J. Revell, *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative,* CBET 14 (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1996), 16-20.

6. Moshe Greenberg attributes the application of this principle to Ezekiel to the work of Hartmut Gese who regarded stylistic variation as "nothing but criteria for identifying glosses, accretions, strata ('Zadokite stratum,' '*naśi* stratum') in these chapters" (Moshe Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," *Interpretation* 38, no. 2 [1984]: 189).

7. Henri Cazelles, "Passages in the Singular Within the Discourse in the Plural of DT 1-4," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1967): 207-219. Though note that Cazelles was not the first scholar to use this criteria for analyzing Deuteronomy this way. Already in 1890s, Carl Steuernagel tracked 2nd person singular-plural variation to delineate redactional layers in the book. See C. Steuernagel, *Das Deuteronomium,* HAT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,

several criteria (repetition, narrative discontinuity, awkward word usage, etc.), but nevertheless focusing on the alternation between 2sg and 2pl forms, he reconstructs two main layers, whose distinct theological messages were also delineated via addressee number. Though these layers are initially quite intertwined in Deuteronomy 1-3, this is less so in Deuteronomy 4 where plural forms prevail in vv.1-21 and singular forms in vv.22-49. Cazelles argues that a first layer of Deuteronomy, written using 2sg forms, went through two revisions: a stratum containing the Book of the Covenant and maledictions against Shechem, then subsequently a "holy war" or "conquest" discourse wherein "the Law was explained as based on the Covenant between God and Israel conceived as an entity…."[8] A second layer of Deuteronomy was then later added to the top, though the blending resulted in what Cazelles calls "overloading."[9] This new layer contained "new ideas on anti-holy war, wisdom, exile, and distinction between the faithful and the unfaithful in Israel" which meant a more "personal approach" was needed, yielding a discourse now addressed in the plural so as to encompass "each Israelite who had to live a personal religion."[10] Useful for our purposes, it is noteworthy that Cazelles equates plural forms of address with a more "personal approach," showing an awareness of an expressive quality that can be imparted via deixis.

1.2 Deixis Variation in Ancient Near Eastern Texts

In spite of Cazelles's confidence, not all scholars have shared his enthusiasm for delineating redactional layers using this criterion. J.G. McConville, for example, tracks the singular-plural variation of Deuteronomy to very different conclusions: "The shifts in address, from individuals to the generality, show that the commands of the covenant lie both upon the whole and its constituent members."[11] Indeed, shifts in style, including deixis, are evident in several ancient Near Eastern sources.[12] Moshe Greenberg cites examples in three prominent texts:

1898). Modern scholarship, though refined, has continued to interpret this variation to these ends. See Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy,* OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 26, 61-62, etc.

8. Cazelles, "Passages in the Singular," 219.

9. Cazelles, "Passages in the Singular," 212. Presumably referring to excessive overwriting of the earlier text rather than preserving the earlier text and harmonizing the two purported editions.

10. Cazelles, "Passages in the Singular," 219.

11. J.G. McConville, "Singular Address in Deuteronomic Law and the Politics of Legal Administration," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 97, no. 3 (2002): 27.

12. Petra Goedegebuure has exhaustively analyzed the rich range of literary roles that deixis plays in Hittite texts. Though her study also includes examination of place deixis (here, there, this, that, etc.) and time deixis (now, then, etc.), her investigation of person deixis is Hittite opens up some important vistas into the interpretation of ancient Near Eastern texts and will stand as a major cross reference for deixis study of Old Testament Hebrew. See Petra Goedegebuure, *The Hittite Demonstratives: Studies in Deixis, Topics and Focus*, Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 55 (Weisbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014).

- Aramaic Sefire inscription (Sefire III): "unpredictable vacillation" between 2sg and 2pl forms.
- Hittite "Instructions for Temple Officials": shift in persons from "you" (addressing the royal cowherds) to "they" (still referring to the royal cowherds).
- Hittite "Instructions for the Commander of the Border Guards": shift from discourse predominantly in the 3rd person to 2nd person direct address.

He concludes: "Clearly official Hittite instructions were not formulated according to our notions of good topical order or consistency of viewpoint."[13]

A few years earlier, Stephen A. Kaufman put the Temple Scroll from Qumran (11QT) to a similar analysis. While 11QT is a combination of lengthy Scriptural citation and original composition, numerous "[a]pparently unmotivated shifts grammatical number and person" are found throughout.[14] What is most peculiar is that while one might think that the author would at least grammatically smooth-out his citations for the sake of uniformity, this is not the case. In fact, he seems to have done quite the opposite: "[N]either does he bother to achieve such consistency in his own contributions. In both original compositions (e.g., 33:8 – number shift; 47:14 – person shift) and, perhaps more surprisingly, even in additional and modifications to biblical quotations and conflations, consistency is not only frequently lacking, it sometimes almost seems intentionally avoided…."[15] Kaufman cites 11QT 20:12-14:

לוא תאכל חמץ ביום ההוא תאכל [ולו]א ת[בוא עליו] השמש ועל כול קורבנבכמה תתנו מלח
ולוא תשבית [בר]ית מלח[] לעול[]ֹם

And leaven shall not be eaten. On that day, it shall be eaten and the sun sh[all n]ot [set upon it]. And upon all your [plural] offerings you [plural] shall put salt and you shall not ce[a]se [a cove]nant of salt foreve]r.[16]

Though 2sg forms have preceded these lines in column 20, the text is dominated by 3rd person forms. Thus Kaufman concludes: "The underlined sentence defies explanation. Its plural forms fail to agree with the overall singular context, but they are not merely quoted from a source phrased in the plural. In fact this sentence is modeled after a biblical text phrased in the singular in the Masoretic Text, Lev. 2:13: עַל כָּל־קָרְבָּנְךָ תַּקְרִיב מֶלַח׃"[17] It would seem that the author of the Temple Scroll did not see variation as undermining coherence in his quotations and his composition. What

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13. Greenberg, "Design and Themes," 188. (For full citation, see footnote 6 above.)

14. Stephen A. Kaufman, "The Temple Scroll and Higher Criticism," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 53 (1982): 36.

15. Kaufman, "Temple Scroll and Higher Criticism," 37.

16. For the textual reconstruction, I am following J.H. Charlesworth, H.W. Morisada Rietz, and L.J. Johns, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 7: Temple Scroll and Related Documents,* PTSDSSP (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Note that underlining is in Kaufman's article. English translation is my own.

17. Kaufman, "Temple Scroll and Higher Criticism," 37.

is clear, however, is that grammatical variation is too quickly mustered in service of diachronic reconstructions; other explanations for this feature should be explored first.

On the one hand, Cazelles, seems aware of this. Thus his argument is bolstered by appeal to other criteria as noted above. But on the other hand, this raises the question about his other criteria: are they really meaningful if variation in person might actually be part of an intentional rhetorical strategy? Might these claimed disjunctions actually be further examples of rhetorical and literary intentionality? Cazelles is unwilling to concede this point. While the ancient Near Eastern examples cited above do not carry much weight for him, his interaction with them is cursory. In fact, he dismisses this evidence without citing a single example or interacting with a single specific text, stating: "In the treaties we find here and there a transition from the singular to the plural, but these are sporadic and explainable."[18] This simply will not do. Greenburg explains: "Viewed alongside comparable writings of the ancient Near East, biblical prescriptive and descriptive texts, including those of Ezekiel, show a comparable level of rationalization and organization. Such lapses as occasionally appear are not outside – indeed are quite inside – the bounds of contemporary and cognate standards of practice known to us from native sources."[19]

1.3 Linguistic Evidence of Deixis Variation

Levinson has observed that "deixis concerns the ways in which languages encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance."[20] While deixis traditionally encompasses references to persons, places, and time, with one exception (Ezekiel 13:14-16, considered below in section 3.2) this paper limits its investigation to personal deixis which encodes "the role of participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered…."[21] At its most basic level, the use of "I" and "you" is pervasive in speech, and yet these deictic particles require interpretation. What is more, linguists have noted cases where deixis does not behave in a wooden manner. Hence the provocative title of a recent study by Franziska Köder and Emar Maier, "When *you* isn't you."[22]

1.3.1 Principles of Coherence and Implicature

When reading a text, a principle of hermeneutics is that the words and sentences cohere. This conviction stems from belief that texts are governed by what H.P. Grice called the "cooperative principle." Erwin M. Segal explains:

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18. Cazelles, "Passages in the Singular," 208.
19. Greenberg, "Design and Themes," 189.
20. Levinson, *Pragmatics,* 54.
21. Levinson, *Pragmatics,* 62.
22. Franziska Köder and Emar Maier, "When *you* isn't you: The attraction of self-ascription in children's interpretation of pronouns in reported speech," *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 2, no.1 (2016): 2.1-17.

> The principle states that normally, language is a cooperative venture between the interlocutors. In this cooperative spirit, speakers give to hearers information that they need for their intended purpose; they don't mislead them by giving them misinformation, or information that is irrelevant to their goals…. Since the cooperative principle is normative, surface deviations from expected expressions may lead the reader to look for a cooperative interpretation of the expression….[23]

Determining how sentences cohere requires understanding of grammatical possibilities and conventions, and the cooperative principle serves as a significant parameter for determining these possibilities and conventions. In the spirit of this principle, a key part of interpretation of discourse is the recognition that seeming incompatibility and incoherence might not truly be such. When textual features deviate from what is expected, a hermeneutical imagination must be employed to understand how this "surface deviation" might actually cohere on a different level.

When looking for coherence in deixis, readers must consider two kinds of inner-textual connections between a given deictic particle and its referent: anaphoric reference and cataphoric reference. An anaphoric reference looks earlier in the discourse for its interpretation[24]:

- Look at the <u>sun</u>. <u>It's</u> going down quickly.
- And he said to me, "<u>Son of man</u>, stand on <u>your</u> feet, and I will speak with <u>you</u>." (Ezek. 2:1)

In these examples, the deictic particles "it" and "your/you" are indexed to the prior use of the words "sun" and "Son of man." In the case of a cataphoric reference, however, the deixis looks later in the discourse for its interpretation:

- <u>It's</u> going down quickly, <u>the sun</u>.
- I am against <u>you</u>, <u>O Tyre</u>. (Ezek. 26:3)

In these examples, the deictic particles "it" and "you" await the arrival of the words "sun" and "Tyre." Generally deixis is referenced anaphorically, thus the referent for a given deictic element should be sought in what precedes. But cataphoric reference does occur and while the examples above show it occurring in very close proximity to

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23. Erwin M. Segal, "Narrative Comprehension and the Role of Deictic Shift Theory," in *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective,* ed. Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1995), 11-12. For examples, see Levinson, *Pragmatics,* 102; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts: The Covenant of Discourse and the Discourse of the Covenant," in *First Theology: God, Scripture, and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 166-67.

24. The sun examples are taken from Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis,* Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 193.

the deictic particle, this is not always the case. An example considered below in Ezekiel 13 illustrates that patience is a virtue for humble readers.[25]

1.3.2 The Influence of Reported Speech on Deixis

There are different situations in which personal deixis becomes especially challenging. First of all, the difference between direct and indirect reported speech can motivate unexpected deixis. Direct speech reports the original statement exactly as it occurred on the lips of the original speaker.

> And to these others, he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him and strike. Your eyes shall not pity and you shall not spare." (Ezek. 9:5)

With indirect speech, however, the speech is rephrased. Cynthia L. Miller notes that minimally, two changes take place: "One, the deictic center of the original is changed to reflect that of the reporting speaker. Two, the original locution is syntactically subordinated to the reporting speaker's frame…."[26] If someone were to recount Ezekiel's own recounting of YHWH's speech, Ezekiel 9:5 might then read as follows:

> YHWH told them that they were to pass through the city after him and strike. *Their* eyes shall not pity and *they* shall not spare.

Syntactical subordination has been achieved with the word "that," and the deixis has shifted from 2nd person ("you") to 3rd ("them/they"). By avoiding 2nd person address, the speaker makes absolutely clear that it was YHWH, not the speaker himself, who uttered the command, and also that the audience of this *reported* speech is not the audience of YHWH's original speech (i.e., the "appointed ones" [פְּקֻדּוֹת] from Ezekiel 9:1 are a "they" vis-à-vis the recipient of this indirect speech report).

On the one hand, the difference between direct and indirect reported speech requires careful attention on its own. In studying how children interpreted the deictic references of speech reports, Köder and Maier noted that direct speech caused more confusion than indirect since the "you" in the speech report did not refer to the children themselves, but to the original recipient of the utterance:

> To correctly interpret a direct speech report … the hearer needs to perform a perspective shift, from the current reporting context … to the original utterance's context…. This perspective shift makes pronoun interpretation in

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25. Peter J. Leithart, "Authors, Authority, and the Humble Reader," in *The Christian Imagination: The Practice of Faith in Literature and Writing,* ed. Leland Ryken, rev. and exp. ed. (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2002), 212-14.

26. Cynthia L. Miller, "Introducing Direct Discourse in Biblical Hebrew Narrative," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics,* ed. Robert D. Bergen (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc., 1994), 200.

direct speech more demanding than in indirect speech for both adults and children, as evident from a higher error rate and longer reaction times....[27]

Though most adults easily make this shift due to practice, the complexity of this endeavor should not be underestimated.

On the other hand, this interpretive work is further convoluted by the fact that some speech reports do not neatly fit within the categories of direct or indirect speech, but use a bewildering combination of both. Gideon Goldenberg observes that this "semi-direct" reported speech often contains "person markers and sometimes other deictics shifted as in indirect discourse, but with some other deictic markers still disclosing characteristic features of direct quotation."[28]

1.3.3 Social Deixis

A second factor that can motivate unexpected deixis is the use of deixis to encode social status between speaker and addressee, so-called "social deixis." Levinson explains:

> In many languages, distinctions of fine gradation between the relative ranks of speaker and addressee are systematically encoded throughout, for example, the morphological system, in which case we talk of honorifics; but such distinctions are also regularly encoded in choices between pronouns, summons forms or vocatives, and titles or address in familiar language.[29]

Thus there are occasions when an address will exhibit unexpected forms (incoherent from a strictly grammatical perspective) in order to indicate nature of the relationship between speech participants.

A number of studies have appeared in recent decades, analyzing use of deferential language or politeness within the biblical text.[30] Miller, for example, has isolated three politeness features within reported speech in the Bible.[31] First, when 1st person suffixes are attached to titles of an addressee, this is called "speaker-based deferential deixis."

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27. Köder and Maier, "When *you* isn't you," 6.

28. Gideon Goldenberg, "On Direct Speech and the Hebrew Bible," in *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Syntax: Presented to Professor J. Hoftizer on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday,* ed. K. Jongeling, H.L. Murre-van den berg, and I. van Rompay, Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 80.

29. Levinson, *Pragmatics,* 63.

30. Marco Di Giulio, "Mitigating Devices in Biblical Hebrew," *Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt* 8, no. 9 (2008): 33-62; Bryan D. Estelle, "Know Before Whom You Stand: The Language of Deference in Some Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Documents" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2001); idem, "The Use of Deferential Language in the Arsames Correspondence and Biblical Aramaic Compared," *MAARAV* 13, no. 1 (2006): 43-74; Revell, *The Designation of the Individual,* 267-322.

31. Cynthia L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis,* HSM 55 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996; repr., Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 272-75.

Genesis 33:8 records the following dialogue: "And he [Esau] said: 'What do you mean by all this camp that I have encountered?' And he [Jacob] said: 'To find grace in the eyes of *my lord*.'" While a vocative (O Lord) would suffice to indicate respect (to be discussed below), adding the 1st person possessive suffix (*my* Lord) further indexes Jacob's subordinate status to his brother. Second, when speakers avoid 1st person expressions, choosing instead to refer to themselves by title with 2nd person suffixes, this is called "addressee-based deferential deixis." Again from the Jacob and Esau encounter: "And [Esau] lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said: 'Who are these to you?' And [Jacob] said: 'The children with whom God has graced *your servant*'" (Gen. 33:5). Though more cumbersome than simply saying "these are the children with whom God has graced *me*," this type of deferential strategy keeps the lowly status of the speaker in view more explicitly. Third, when 3rd person forms are used, either vocatives or suffixes, this is called "distant/anaphoric deferential deixis." Jacob says to Esau in Genesis 33:14: "May my lord pass before *his servant*…." This clause couples a speaker-based feature (my lord) with a distant feature (*his servant* – referring to the speaker himself), and the request "may he pass" is also in 3rd person (with the polite particle נָא), making this a highly deferential address.

There are times, however, when similar features can create opposite social indices. Anna Siewierska notes that plural forms can be used ambivalently. A singular speaker, for example, can use 1st person plural forms for the purpose of showing respect, the so-called "plural of modesty." In one example, a maid addresses her superior as follows: "What was the prescription Miss? If you will tell me, *we* [I] shall try to remember it so that [I] can pass it on to others."[32] But plural forms used in the 2nd or 3rd persons can serve as denigrating devices. In effort to show self-effacement to a superior, a woman refers to her grandson in 3rd plural: "Oh, I don't concern myself with their (his) affairs. I just let them (him) get on with it."[33] This plural form has the effect of showing that she does not view her grandson as being on par with her superior. Likewise, though use of 3rd person address in place of 2nd person can signal deference as noted above, it can also be used to address an inferior as in the case of baby-talk: "Timmy must be a good boy and eat his dinner" (words spoken to Timmy).[34] And though use of 1st person forms in the context of direct, 2nd person address can signal deference, it can also be used to address an inferior as with a doctor addressing his patient: "How are we today? Why have we still not eaten?"[35] In 2 Samuel 6:20, Michal actually denigrates David using 3rd person deixis: "How has *the king of Israel* honored *himself* today, who uncovered *himself* in the eyes of the maids of *his* servants as one of the rabble completely uncovers himself." Though the 3rd

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32. Anna Siewierska, *Person,* Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 219.

33. Siewierska, *Person,* 220.

34. Siewierska, *Person,* 223. For a fuller discussion of this phenomenon, see Rosemary Brener, "Learning the Deictic Meaning of Third Person Pronouns," *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 12, no. 3 (1983): 254-55.

35. Siewierska, *Person,* 223.

person deixis sounds deferential at first, the second half of the phrase makes clear Michal's derogatory intent. Thus care must be taken while reading texts to see whether or not unexpected deictic forms might be due to the author's use of social deixis.

1.3.4 The Use of Deixis in Expressive Speech

A third factor that can motivate unexpected deixis is the use of expressive speech. Authors use a number of tools to mark emphasis in their writing; the use of unexpected deixis is one of them. [36] E.J. Revell's study, *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative,* examines this phenomenon in detail.[37] While this is not a book devoted exclusively to deixis, use of the word "designation" in the title does indicate the significant role deixis plays in his analysis of expressive (or emphatic) language.

Building upon and refining several earlier studies, Revell devotes an entire section to coherence (what he calls "the logic of concord").[38] First, he considers the types of deixis that accompany collective nouns (i.e., nouns in the singular that denote a group of humans; examples include: עַם, "people"; יִשְׂרָאֵל, "Israel"; דּוֹר, "generation"; etc.). Though collective nouns are grammatically singular, they are known to take plural deixis at times. Sometimes this is a marker of perspective: singular deixis conceives the collective as a single unit, plural deixis conceives the collective as a group of individuals.[39] Revell notes, however, that this does not always hold up. Instead, there is "a correlation between the choice of number and the function of the clause in question in its context."[40] Collective nouns default to singular deixis, but when plurals are used this marks the clause as "immediate," that is "central to the purpose of the communication being made."[41]

In Ezekiel, however, Revell's analysis must be modified since the book's later form of Hebrew treats collective nouns differently.[42] Late biblical Hebrew, unlike its predecessors, defaults to plural deixis with collective nouns. The Hebrew of Ezekiel

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36. The standard study of this topic is Takamitsu Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985).

37. For full citation information, see footnote 5 above.

38. Revell's study of the variation between the 1sg pronouns אֲנִי/אָנֹכִי is especially useful for exegetes, though since Ezekiel exhibits a later form of Hebrew than Judges, Samuel and Kings (Revell's primary texts), this approach is not applicable to the book. Of the 170 occurrences of the 1sg pronoun in Ezekiel, אָנֹכִי occurs only once (Ezek. 36:28). We will say more about Ezekiel's place in the history of the Hebrew language below while considering Ezekiel 13.

39. E.g., Bruce K. Waltke and M.P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 119.

40. Revell, *Designation of the Individual,* 221.

41. Revell, *Designation of the Individual,* 228.

42. The review of Samuel Meier identifies an additional incompatibility between Revell's analysis on p. 333 and the book of Ezekiel; Samuel Meier, review of *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative*, by E.J. Revell, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 3 (1998): 523.

follows suit.[43] Nevertheless, Revell's observations lead us to pay attention to the deixis of collectives in Ezekiel, now looking for opposite phenomena. What is unexpected in Ezekiel is to find collective nouns with singular deixis as we do in a few places. Though the collocation בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל ("House of Israel") is typically rendered with plural deixis (even in early and standard biblical Hebrew), the phrase כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כֻּלֹּה ("the whole house of Israel, all of *it* [3ms]") occurs in Ezekiel 11:15, 20:40, and 36:10. Elsewhere, collectives followed by כל with pronominal suffixes take the plural deixis (כֻּלָּם) with only one exception (Ezek. 35:15, וְכָל־אֱדוֹם כֻּלָּה, "the whole of Edom, all of *it* [3fs]"). The singular deixis seems to match the emphatic construction.[44] Ezekiel 33:6 is the only other exception to late biblical Hebrew collectives: וְהָעָם לֹא־נִזְהָר "and the people are not warned [Niph pf. 3ms]." Here too, emphasis seems to be at work as this is the climax of the watchman metaphor in 33:1-6.[45]

Revell next considers concord with compound nominals (i.e., two or more nouns which together serve as the subjects of a given verb). His analysis shows that singular verbs that precede the compound nominal mark the first noun as "the 'principal' of the compound," designating "the leader or superior among those represented by the compound."[46] Judges 14:5 is typical:

וַיֵּרֶד שִׁמְשׁוֹן וְאָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ

And Samson and his father and his mother went down (3ms verb)

If a plural verb is used, however, this principal is ignored. Revell suggests several reasons for this: the characters represented by the compound do not include the primary character of the scene; the plural verb is a discourse marker, used to signal the final clause of a textual unit; the characters represented by the compound participate equally in the action.[47]

Finally, Revell considers variation in number in both 1st and 2nd person pronouns. Concerning the former, he concludes that 1pl forms where 1sg are expected can be attributed to politeness strategies, the so-called "plural for self-effacement."[48] Conversely, 1sg forms used instead of expected 1pl seem to be evidence of distributive usage. Concerning 2nd person forms, Revell notes that evidence for "expressive use of variation in number … is not particularly strong, and much of it is conventionally expunged by emendation, with some versional [i.e., text-critical] support."[49]

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43. Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*, LHBOTS 90 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990), 94-96.

44. Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 341, n. 3.

45. In v.7, God shifts his address directly to Ezekiel and no longer speaks of a hypothetical "watchman" called to warn "a land."

46. Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 230.

47. Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 231-32. It should be noted that in Ezekiel, though there are several examples of compound nominals, none exhibit any of these immediate (emphatic) uses. See Ezek. 5:17; 7:15; 7:19; 22:7; 27:7, 17, 34; 40:17.

48. Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 250.

49. Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, 261.

Nevertheless, he does observe a method to 2nd person forms differing in number from their antecedents. A 2sg pronoun with a 2pl antecedent is marked and distributive in nature. The focus is placed on individuals within the group being addressed. A 2pl pronoun with a 2sg antecedent, however, distances the speaker from the addressee, showing deference.[50]

While we have noted that Revell's method does not apply in all its particulars to Ezekiel due to the different linguistic strata of his corpus (Judges, Samuel, and Kings) and Ezekiel, what we see is a compelling methodological stance: the assumption that variation in concord is not accidental but meaningful and should therefore be closely analyzed to understand the poetics and literary import of the variation. In sum, care must be taken while reading texts to see whether or not unexpected deictic forms might be due to the author's expressive use of language. In the analysis below, we have sought in particular to do just this.

1.3.5 The Use of Deixis to Shape Point of View

A final factor that can motivate unexpected deixis is the author's effort to manipulate the point of view. Deixis is, properly speaking, semantically empty.[51] Though the words "girl" or "city" or "sky" contain a meaning that is independent of a given discourse context, this is not so with the words "here" or "then" or "you."

Deictic expressions require a narrative context to be anchored to a specific referent, in particular a who, where, when, or what.[52] Whether made explicit or left implicit, this narrative situation is called the deictic center. But the deictic center is not static; a discourse can record a change in circumstances that shift the deictic center to other participants. And so while "you" may mean one thing in one context, by changing the "who" makeup of the group, "you" will mean something else. For example, in a scene where a man is speaking to a woman, "you" will refer to the woman. But should another character enter and the man again use the word "you," care must be taken to sort out whom he is now addressing. When new details explicitly alter the narrative context, new anchor points to the deictic center are easily assimilated. But this does not always occur. Imagine a conversation between a husband and wife, where the wife suddenly says, "You can come out now." This statement hardly fits the context, but should a child emerge from a hiding place behind the couch, the referentiality is now assimilated to the change. Though the reader was

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50. Revell, *Designation of the Individual,* 262. Revell notes that with collective nominals, number variation is used to represent levels of specificity. But as we noted above, the later Hebrew linguistic profile of Ezekiel skews his analysis which was based on standard biblical Hebrew texts.

51. Hugh C. White, "A Theory of the Surface Structure of the Biblical Narrative," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 34, no. 3 (1979): 161.

52. David A. Zubin and Lynne E. Hewitt, "The Deictic Center: A Theory of Deixis in Narrative," in *Deixis In Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective,* ed., Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1995), 133-40; Levinson, *Pragmatics,* 63-64.

unaware of the child, the speaker herself was and the deixis reflected her point of view. Seeming deictic incongruence actually coheres as the deixis has been used narratively to shift the point of view and include other characters in the discourse not previously recognized.[53]

2. Deixis Variation Applied to Psalms and Proverbs

In her study of the wisdom Psalms, Catherine Petrany devotes special attention to grammatical features that highlight the speech orientation of the text, in particular the identity of the addressees in Psalms and Proverbs. Highlighting rapid shifts in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person speech, she notes a tight relationship between the form and content of the instructions: "one cannot extract the substance of the psalmist's sapientially attuned exhortations from the communicative framework in which they occur."[54]

Most significant for her analysis is her observation of the way in which deixis incorporates readers into the communication event of the biblical text. Though Psalms and Proverbs often make explicit a particular addressee via vocative statements (Ps. 22:24, "O Fearers of YHWH"; Ps. 32:11 "O Righteous Ones"; Prov. 3:1 "My Son"; etc.), unexpected deictic shifts in person reveal a literary strategy to expand the number of addressees. Thus speaking of the role of the reader in Psalms and Proverbs is not simply the result of analyzing these books through the lens of a post-modern literary *theory,* but of taking seriously the grammar and syntax of the text itself which can only be explained as an intentional effort to address future readers of these books.

In Proverbs 1-9, Petrany notes that the text clearly identifies the speaker and audience with only a few exceptions. Proverbs 1:8 is a standard example: "Hear, my son, the correction of your father; and do not forsake the teaching of your mother." The speaker, though singular, is the father and mother, and the addressee, as indicated by the vocative, is the son. There is a clear I-you referentiality in these texts.

There are times, however, when grammatical variations blur the speaker-addressee relationship. With the shift away from the longer discourses of Proverbs 1-9 to the shorter proverbial sayings of Proverbs 10-31, the deictic profile changes significantly. Petrany explains:

> What is missing [in Prov. 10-31] … is the manifest relationship between the first-person "I" and the second-person "you" that emerges grammatically through the use of vocatives, pronouns, and second-person suffixes in the father/son constructions. Instead, the audience, and most often the speaker as well, remain grammatically unrecognized while third-person, indicative statements dominate the discourse…. This grammatical and rhetorical ambiguity introduces the question of the identity of both speaker and

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53. Levinson, *Pragmatics,* 64. For a detailed study on this phenomena, see Gary Yamasaki, *Watching a Biblical Narrative: Point of View in Biblical Exegesis* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008).

54. Catherine Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise: The Wisdom of the Psalms and Psalter,* FAT 2/83 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 213.

audience, and indeed how each identify themselves in relation to the righteous and the wicked.[55]

When Proverbs' book-form is fully appreciated – i.e., recognized as a print media designed to preserve a message beyond an initial discourse between an individual father and his son – this ambiguity suddenly plays a more significant role: it incorporates the reader even though explicit cues for this are lacking.[56] Petrany suggests: "The absence of first- and second-person speech suggests not only a greater flexibility of function, but also a greater responsibility on the part of the audience to make meaning…. In other words, the unacknowledged audience must transform the brief, poetic reflection into the didactic exhortation-motivation for him/herself."[57] The book of Proverbs, then, can be viewed as intentionally addressed to its reader(s).

Petrany's primary concern is the book of Psalms, however, and her analysis of these texts is even more fruitful for seeing how the reader is transformed into the addressee via deixis. The audience ambiguity we observed in Proverbs 10-31 increases all the more, creating in the Psalter a "complex web of speech":

> Multiple characters speak and are spoken about. Multiple addressees listen and are invited to take up the call to participate in liturgical activity. Multiple subjects occupy the psalmist's attention and multiple life situations give rise to his/her musings. Shifts in the direction of speech can occur at a rapid pace that confounds attempts to parse how it should be received, and what action it demands.[58]

And while the "vertical orientation" (divine/human axis) of the Psalter (with God himself addressing a seemingly undifferentiated "you") causes more than just the Psalmist to be the addressee of God's words, more significant is the "horizontal orientation" (human/human axis), where the Psalmist either does not designate his addressee using vocatives, or he uses 3rd person speech "directed towards no one in particular, with no immediately presented expectation of response, verbal or otherwise."[59]

Psalm 1 is a paradigm example of a Psalm with no expressed addressee. It contains no 2nd person or even 1st person plural language. In fact, it contains no prescriptions at all. While it can be implied that this model man (who is blessed, does not associate with the wicked, and instead attends to God's law) is to be emulated, this is not made explicit. Its textual form, however, does assume the existence of a reader

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55. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 53-55.

56. Compare with the explicit mention of the reader in Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14 (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω, "May the reader understand").

57. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 56-57.

58. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 70.

59. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 78.

who is to respond in some way to its message.[60] This profile is not typical for the Psalms though; most "do not sustain third-person discourse throughout, but rather use indicative passages to supplement address to various audiences."[61]

In many hymns, 3rd person speech about God occurs in the context of a 2nd person call to the congregation. In Psalm 47, the addressee is made explicit via vocatives and deixis, and God is depicted in 3rd person vis-à-vis this human addressee:

> All peoples, clap your hands
> Raise a shout to God with a loud sound
> For YHWH Most High is to be feared
> A great king over all the earth.
> (Ps. 47:1-2)

But other times the human/horizontal addressee is unexpressed. Several Psalms juxtapose speech *about* God with speech *to* God. Consider this example:

> For the sake of *your* name, *O YHWH*
> Forgive my sin, for it is great
> Who is this – the man who fears YHWH?
> He will teach him the way he should choose
> (Ps. 25:11-12)

Address to God is seen in italics, but then underlining shows that God is addressed in the 3rd person as YHWH, and is referenced as the subject of the Hiphil verb "teach" (יוֹרֶנּוּ). Thus the Psalmist is now addressing someone *other than* God v.12. On a larger scale, this occurs also in Psalm 92. The structure is as follows:

1a:	Words spoken about YHWH
1b-11:	Words spoken to YHWH
12-15:	Words spoken about YHWH

Petrany notes that "when third-person speech *about* God stands beside second-person address *to* God, some kind of directional shift has taken place."[62] As it applies to Psalm

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60. John Calvin suggests that the Psalmist "inculcates upon all the godly the duty of meditating upon the law of God," although the ambiguity might just as easily inculcate upon the wicked a better understanding of their precarious position and urge them to exchange the way of perishing for the way of prosperity (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms,* trans. James Anderson [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003], 1:1).

61. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 79.

62. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 80. Petrany interacts extensively with W. Derek Suderman whose own methodology and analysis is equally relevant to this study. See W. Derek Suderman, "Prayers Heard and Overheard: Shifting Address and Methodological Matrices in Psalms Scholarship" (PhD diss., Toronto School of Theology, 2007); idem, "Are Individual Complaint Psalms Really Prayers? Recognizing Social Address as Characteristic of Individual Complaints," in *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God*

92, these shifts "change the effect of the third-person reflection for *the implicit human audience, drawing them into the first-person plural of worship* (vs. 14) that is distinctly psalmic" (emphasis added).[63] And so by her careful attention to deixis in Proverbs and Psalms, Petrany has helped to make evident the cues that the reader himself is addressed by these texts and is expected to respond in acceptance of wise teaching and praise.

That this interpretive strategy is appropriate to prophetical texts has been observed by James D. Nogalski, though only in introductory fashion and without reference to the linguistic underpinnings we have considered above.[64] Nevertheless, it signals a growing awareness of the utility of this literary feature for exegesis. The rhetorical import of deictic shifts in Ezekiel is thus astutely recognized by Thomas Renz: "[T]he book invites its readers to identify with the exilic community. It does not address directly a world beyond the world of the prophet Ezekiel, but rather invites prospective readers to enter into the world of refugees in 'Tel Aviv' and their prophet."[65] Alternating deixis therefore has a unique ability to shape the presentation of a biblical text's message, giving a depth to its content and delivery that assists its communicative intent. To explore this further, we now turn to selected passages of Ezekiel.

3 Alternation of Deixis in Ezekiel

3.1 Ezekiel 6

This study begins with an analysis of Ezekiel 6 as it is the first use of personification (apostrophe) in the book and therefore, as metaphorical, vacillates between two levels of interpretation: the literal/literary image and the actual/real-world subject of the imagery.[66] This vacillation is attested specifically in the use of personal deixis, thus deliberately tracking the use of deixis will be the burden of this section of the paper. Though the logic of the chapter seems simple enough from a cursory read, appearances can be deceiving. Ronald M. Hals warns: "The structure of the chapter's development leaves many uncertainties…. The logic of the personal suffixes is also complex."[67]

The chapter is delineated by the divine word formula (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר "The word of the Lord came to me, saying") occurring at Ezekiel 6:1 and 7:1, meaning 6:1-14 is a single textual unit consisting of two subunits: vv.1-10 and vv.11-14. There are two levels of address to be distinguished: (1) God's word *to* Ezekiel and (2) God's

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Through Historically Dissimilar Traditions, ed. Randall Heskett and Brian Irwin, LHBOTS 469 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 153-70; idem, "The Vocative *Lamed* and Shifting Address in the Psalms: Reevaluating Dahood's Proposal," *Vetus Testamentum* 65, no. 2 (2015): 297-312.

63. Petrany, *Pedagogy, Prayer and Praise*, 211.

64. James D. Nogalski, *Interpreting Prophetic Literature: Historical and Exegetical Tools for Reading the Prophets* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 24-26.

65. Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 16.

66. For apostrophe as a particular type of metaphor, see Leland Ryken, *Sweeter Than Honey, Richer Than Gold: A Guided Study of Biblical Poetry,* Reading the Bible as Literature (Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2015), 53-55.

67. Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel,* FOTL 19 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 38.

word (to someone else) *through* Ezekiel. In v.2 the former is evident as God designates Ezekiel as the addressee via the vocative בֶּן־אָדָם ("son of man") and then offers instructions to him in 2ms verbal forms (both imperative and *waw* + perfect) and suffixes: v.2, שִׂים פָּנֶיךָ ("set your face"), וְהִנָּבֵא ("and prophesy"); v.3, וְאָמַרְתָּ ("and you shall say"). Following the first verb of v.3, the second level of address begins as God's word to the mountains of Israel is given through Ezekiel. The vocative הָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ("mountains of Israel") and the 2mp imperative שִׁמְעוּ ("hear!") signal the shift, indicating that though Ezekiel is the one listening to God's address, what follows is actually directed to the mountains. The following verses read as one would expect for this scenario; 2mp possessive suffixes in vv.3-4.

With v.5, however, there is a shift that is easily missed. The beginning of v.5 might still be read as continuing the address to the personified mountains by viewing the dead bodies of the sons of Israel as set before *their* (namely, the sons of Israel's own) idols (גִּלּוּלֵיהֶם, 3mp deixis). But things get more complicated. Though it is possible for the reference to "your slain" (חַלְלֵיכֶם) who are cast down before "your idols" (גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם) to refer to those slain and cast down before the idols that have been erected *upon* the mountains, the phrase "and I will scatter *your bones*" (וְזֵרִיתִי אֶת־עַצְמוֹתֵיכֶם) no longer fits the context of the address. After all, mountains have no bones, nor are they ever depicted as having them metaphorically.[68]

The reader attuned to the two levels of metaphor described above will recognize that God's speech has suddenly injected the real-world referent into the metaphorical speech.[69] The mountains thus stand in for the idolaters who live in Judah, and though mountains themselves do not have bones, idolatrous people do. This fundamentally changes how we read the following 2mp references, but also affects the possessive 2mp suffixes on חַלְלֵיכֶם ("your slain") and גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם ("your idols") we have considered already. Even these seem actually to be referring to the subject of the metaphor itself: the idolatrous people living in Judah.

On the one hand, the metaphorical nature of this passage lends itself to using deixis to shift toward the real-life subject. Indeed, Michael A. Lyons notes this as typical for Ezekiel: "When employing symbolic language, Ezekiel has a notable tendency to move back and forth between symbol and interpretation, or between symbol and reality."[70] But on the other hand, commentators have also noted that Ezekiel 6 is directly dependent upon Leviticus 26, in particular Leviticus 26:30-33. Since the 2mp suffixes in Leviticus 26 consistently refer to the Israelites themselves,

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68. Verse 6 also tilts toward human referents with the phrase בְּכֹל מוֹשְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם ("in all your dwellings"). It would seem to be strained to interpret this as an apostrophe of mountains.

69. This is common in the general use of metaphor: "Once a metaphor has been established it may be extended as long as suits a writer, but an extremely lengthy spelling out of a metaphor runs the risk of becoming a conceit. *Brevity is for the most part a virtue of metaphor* and it is rare that one escapes the confines of a few sentences" (Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* [Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1985], 22; emphasis added).

70. Michael A. Lyons, *An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel,* T&T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 44.

Leslie Allen describes Leviticus as having a "magnetic pull" upon Ezekiel 6.[71] Far from being a scribal accident whereupon the borrowed material was not fully integrated into the new context, the shift intentionally cues the astute, intertextual reader to read Ezekiel 6 through the lens of Leviticus 26.[72]

The remainder of the subunit (Ezek. 6:7-10) maintains the shift toward the real-life subject. Even as God's speech distinguishes between the idolatrous Judeans and the exiles who repent among the nations where they are scattered, 2nd person deixis is used exclusively for the mountains/house of Israel and 3rd person deixis is used for the penitent. This is not always clear in English translations which translate v.8 as an address, seemingly to those left alive. For example, the ESV translates "Yet I will leave some of you alive," giving the impression that the writer has begun to address the escapees. The Hebrew syntax is more awkward than that – וְהוֹתַרְתִּי בִּהְיוֹת לָכֶם פְּלִיטֵי חֶרֶב – which Horace D. Hummel translates literalistically as "I will leave in the being to you escapees of the sword."[73] The addressee still seems to be the mountains/house of Israel who are being told about escapees in their midst.

The recognition formula in v.10 causes no grammatical problems, though its content introduces some ambiguity. The deixis is 3mp and appears to refer to the escapees likewise referenced with 3mp in v.9: "And they will know that I am the LORD." But the second clause describes the circumstances of this knowledge: when they realize that God had not said in vain that he would perform this calamity (הָרָעָה חַזֹּאת) to them (לָהֶם). If "this calamity" refers to the exile-scattering of v.8, then the deictic orientation has not changed: it is still the Judeans being told about how the escapees will interpret their exilic status. But if "this calamity" refers to the events of vv.3-7, then it may be that the address has shifted to someone else who is being told about the Judeans. It is possible that a new "you" has been implicitly introduced, though this possibility awaits further information from the remainder of the discourse.[74]

In v.11, the messenger formula (כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה "thus says the Lord GOD") signals a new subunit. The return to 2ms suffixes and verbs now signal a shift back to God's address to Ezekiel:

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71. Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19,* WBC 28 (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 87-88.

72. Pace Michael A. Lyons, "Transformation of Law: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code," in *Transforming Visions: Transformation of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel,* ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 127 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 9.

73. Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 194.

74. We are not helped by the reference to calamity/evil (רָעָה) in v.9 since there the reference is to Israel's own sinful behavior, hence the translation of the word as "evil" by the ESV, NASB, and NIV. There are other places in Ezekiel where רָעָה is clearly a reference to the people's sin. But in other places, רָעָה is something God does to Israel in response to their sin (Ezek. 7:5, 14:22), hence the translation "calamity." Unfortunately, the use of רָעָה in Ezekiel 6:10 remains ambiguous.

הַכֵּה בְכַפְּךָ וּרְקַע בְּרַגְלְךָ וֶאֱמָר

Strike your hand and stamp your foot and say …

But as the speech proper begins, the identity of the addressee proves to be unclear. Though the house of Israel (v.11) might initially seem to be the addressee carried over from vv.1-10, the 3mp deixis (יִפֹּלוּ, "they shall fall") indicates that it is someone else who is being told *about* the house of Israel. This unspecified "someone else" is addressed in v.13 in the recognition formula (וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה "And you [2mp] will know that I am the LORD"). It is clear, however, that this "you" is not to be identified with the mountains/people of Israel described via metaphor in vv.5-7, for the recognition formulae in v.13 states that the addressee will know YHWH "when *their* [i.e., the house of Israel] slain are in the midst of *their* idols surrounding *their* altars," directly referencing the events that will befall the mountains/people of Israel in vv.5-7. What was ambiguous in v.10 is clear in v.13. Greenberg explains: "The pronouns are inconsistent … because the focus shifts from those in the land, about whom the prophet speaks, to the exiles, to whom in reality the words are addressed."[75] This "you," Ezekiel's real-life audience, remains in focus through the end of the chapter as the mountains/people of Israel are consistently referenced with 3mp deixis.

Thus Ezekiel 6 provides an introduction to the literary use of deixis pervasive throughout the book. Deixis has been used to differentiate God's word to Ezekiel (2ms) from God's word to the house of Israel though Ezekiel (2mp). Deixis has also been used to uncover the real-life referents of the mountain metaphor, using 2mp suffixes on words that refer to the human audience (v.5, your bones; v.6 your dwellings). But finally, and perhaps most significantly for the overall message of Ezekiel, deixis has been used to incorporate Ezekiel's audience into the message. The "you" explicitly addressed in v.13 (and implicitly addressed elsewhere) is suddenly called upon to respond appropriately to this act that will befall Jerusalem. God will be known when he judges his people for their sin. Unfortunately, Ezekiel's audience does not recognize this; they instead respond with skepticism, presumption, and excuses (see Ezek. 12:2, 22-23; 14:3; 18:2, etc.).

3.2 Ezekiel 13

Ezekiel 13 stands within a collection of textual units devoted to the topic of prophecy, each delineated by the divine word formula (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר "The word of the Lord came to me, saying"; see 12:21, 12:26, 13:1, 14:1). Within Ezekiel 13, two oracles are delineated, one against prophets (vv.2-16) and the other against prophetesses (vv.17-23). They are both marked by similar instructions and themes: First, an instruction to prophesy (vv.2, 17); second, description of the prophets as those who "prophesy out of their own hearts" (vv.2, 17); third, an initial messenger formula (כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה "thus says the LORD") followed by subsequent use of the same

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75. Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel, 1-20,* AB 22 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 136.

formulae within the oracle (vv.3, 8, 13, 18, 20); fourth, a pronouncement of woe (הוֹי;
vv.3, 18); fifth, a recognition formulae (וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי [אֲדֹנָי] יְהוָה "And you shall know
that I am the [Lord] YHWH") following description of God's judgment (v.8, 14, 21,
23). Thus the whole of Ezekiel 13 is marked by a "unified literary design."[76] The
passage does, however, manifest a wide range of deictic variation which has caused
many scholars to view this design as the result of later redaction. While deixis does
cause some interpretive challenges, especially in vv.19-21, it also seems to aid the
hortatory thrust of the text.

Ezekiel 13:2-16 excoriates the false prophets of Israel. While the gender deixis of
the passage is (mostly) stable, person deixis alternates significantly. In v.2, Ezekiel's
address to the false prophets is in 2mp, "hear (שִׁמְעוּ) the word of YHWH." In v.3,
however, reference shifts to 3pl. The woe is given "concerning" (עַל) the prophets, and
subsequent pronominal suffixes (רוּחָם, "their spirit") and verbs (רָאוּ "they see," הָיוּ
"they are") shift into 3rd person. This shift, however, is due to the change in addressee
marked by the vocative: O Israel. As v.5 resumes 2mp address, now referring to the
house of Israel in 3rd person, this seems to mark a return to the prophets themselves as
the addressees. With the exception of v.9, deixis remains stable within each verse,
though alternates from verse to verse: v.6 (3mp), v.7-8 (2mp), v.9 (3mp → 2mp), v.10
(3mp). Verse 11 exhibits some ambiguity with a poetic address to hailstones in the 2nd
person (apostrophe), it resumes 2mp in v.12 and sustains it through the end of the sub-
unit (v.16) with only one additional peculiarity to be considered below.

In making sense of this 3mp/2mp variation, scholars have taken various
approaches.[77] Davis attributes this to the shift from orality to textuality:

> The confusing alternation of second- and third-person speech in the
> denunciation of the corrupt prophets (13.2-16) … is best considered in terms
> of Ezekiel's liminality. In the absence of a literary convention governing this
> kind of "fictitious speech", the prophet's disposition vacillates between that

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76. Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 1-24,* 400; cf. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 243. Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 365, shows the literary balance with the following outline:

I. False prophets (13:1-16)
        A. Charges against the imposters (13:1-7)
     B. Penalty (13:8-16)
        1. First announcement of judgment (13:8-12)
        2. Second announcement of judgment (13:13-16)
II. False prophetesses (13:17-23)
        A. Charges against the imposters (13:17-19)
     B. Penalty (13:20-23)
        1. First announcement of judgment (13:20-21)
        2. Second announcement of judgment (13:22-23)

77. Redaction-critical solutions have been proposed of course, though Greenberg insists: "this theory cannot avoid manipulating the text even further in order to obtain consistency, and Herrmann and Zimmerli rightly give up the persons as a criterion" (Greenburg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 243).

of the orator and that of the writer, respectively engaged in direct confrontation and exposition.[78]

Davis is certainly right to see that the literary nature of the book gives it a "fictitious" quality (i.e., fictitious not in terms of historicity, but in terms of the literarily shaped or "constructed" nature of the dialogue).[79] This does, however, view the variation as somewhat accidental, thus circumventing any literary intentionality. Greenberg ascribes the alternation to "rapid changes in the mental address of the prophet...."[80] That is to say, the variation is a literary remnant of an earlier written draft of the oracle wherein errors or roughness from this draft were not removed in subsequent revisions. But was this historical moment preserved only accidentally (as Greenberg claims of Ezekiel 23), or does it relate directly to Ezekiel's intended addressee?

More satisfying is the approach of Daniel I. Block. Concerning Ezekiel 13:7, he observes: "By transforming a descriptive statement into a rhetorical question, and by shifting from the third to the second person of direct address, he forces his hearers to interact with his charges. This oracle is about them!"[81] Quite in harmony with Petrany's observations of 2nd and 3rd person in the Psalms, Block sees the shift as a rhetorical move, although Ezekiel seems to have his direct audience in view (i.e., Israel as indicated by the vocative in v.4) rather than an unspecified, later reader as Petrany describes. Nonetheless, it does show deixis as a tool for shifting the direction of the prophet's address. Israel must not claim to excuse itself from the sins of its leaders, the false prophets; both fall within the purview of the direct address.

As mentioned above, there is a deictic peculiarity in Ezekiel 13:14-16, although as it does not relate to the personal deixis/addressee orientation just considered, we treat it separately as simply an example of Ezekiel's literary creativity. In v.5, Ezekiel chastises the prophets for not building up a wall (גָּדֵר) for the protection of the house of Israel. The imagery (and terminology) morphs in v.11, now showing how the false prophets maintain the wall (חַיִץ) built by the people merely by smearing it with whitewash (i.e., they remove the cracks from sight while doing nothing to mend or fortify it). Verse 12 then describes the final fate of that wall (now coined a קִיר): it will fall. Each of the three words for wall used are masculine and this grammatical gender is reflected in the verbs and suffixes used (e.g., v.10 אֹתוֹ; v.11 וְיִפֹּל; v.12 נָפַל). At v.14, however, a subtle shift happens:

> And I will throw down the wall (קִיר) which you have smeared with whitewash, and I will hurl it down (וְהִגַּעְתִּיהוּ, verb + 3ms object suffix) to the earth and its foundation (יְסֹדוֹ, 3ms possessive suffix) will be uncovered. And it will fall (וְנָפְלָה, 3fs verb) and you will perish in its midst (בְּתוֹכָהּ, 3fs possessive suffix).

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78. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll,* 27.

79. Cf. Deborah Tannen, "Introducing constructed dialogue in Greek and American conversational and literary narrative," in *Direct and Indirect Speech,* ed. Florian Coulmas, Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs 31 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986), 313-314.

80. Greenburg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 243.

81. Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 1-24,* 403. (For full citation, see footnote 44 above.)

As is clear, the antecedent to all the following suffixes and verbs is the masculine singular word קִיר, thus the shift to feminine singular forms is puzzling. But this actually shows that the metaphor "wall" is not just an abstract illustration as vv.15b-16 show:

> The wall (קִיר) is no more, and those who smeared it (אֹתוֹ, 3ms suffix) are no more, the prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem, who saw visions of peace for her (לָהּ, 3fs object suffix), but there was no peace declares the Lord GOD.

As Jerusalem itself is the antecedent to the 3fs suffix (לָהּ), the earlier fuzziness now comes into focus. The wall built by Israel and smeared by the prophets with whitewash is nothing less than the city of Jerusalem. Thus the wall metaphor begins to splinter early on, giving way to its real-life referent.

In the second oracle of Ezekiel 13, directed toward the false prophetesses (vv.17-23), the deixis remains remarkably stable. Unlike the first oracle, 2nd person deixis persists.[82] This second oracle, however, does exhibit a perplexing variation in vv.19-21 between 2fp and 2mp forms:

> [19]And you (2fp) have profaned me among my people with handfuls of barley and with pieces of bread – killing souls who should not die and keeping alive souls who should not live – with your (2mp) lies to my people who listen to lies. [20]Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against your (2fp) bands with which you (2fp) hunt the souls like birds. And I will tear them from your (2mp) arms and let loose the souls who you (2mp) hunt, [I will let them loose[83]] like birds. [21]I will tear off your (2mp) veils and I will deliver my people from your (2fp) hands. And they will no longer be in your (2fp) hands as prey, and you (2fp) will know that I am the LORD.[84]

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82. The only exception is v.17 which uses 3fp forms in reference to the prophetesses as part of the quotative frame. Once the speech proper begins, however, the oracle remains in the 2nd person.

83. The phrase in square brackets is added for clarity though it is not found in the Hebrew. This appears to be an example of ellipses, giving a poetic character to the speech. See Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques,* LHBOTS 26 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986), 303-306.

84. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* proposes several conjectural emendations that bring the 2mp deixis into agreement, either by emending to 2fp or 3mp, yet this is not the case with all the 2mp deixis. Likewise, Giovanni de Rossi has identified a number of manuscripts that render the 2fp suffixes as 2mp (בְּיֶדְכֶם/מִיֶּדְכֶם → בְּיֶדְכָן/מִיֶּדְכָן) and the 2fp verb וִידַעְתֶּן as 2mp וִידַעְתֶּם. See Johannis B. De-Rossi, *Varie Lectiones Veteris Testamenti* (Parma, 1784-1788), 3:137.

Mark F. Rooker has noted that Ezekiel exhibits the well-attested leveling of masculine and feminine gender in 2nd and 3rd person plural forms found in late biblical Hebrew.[85] As he and others have proposed Ezekiel as an example of "transitional biblical Hebrew," a stage between standard and late biblical Hebrew, the seeming lack of meaningful or predictable gender variation would make sense within that linguistic chronology.[86] Nevertheless, it is hard to understand how a distinct stage of language (albeit a liminal one) can be posited as the single cause of variation like this. Might there be another explanation?

It is frequently observed that "gender in the case of the first and second persons is directly tied to the sex of the speaker or addressee."[87] Thus the shift from masculine to feminine here might seem to be a shift in addressee, perhaps analogous to the shift from 3rd to 2nd person noted above in Ezekiel 13:2-16. Since the deixis in vv.19-21 shifts within verses unlike in vv.5-14 where this happens only once (v.9), clear demarcation between distinct addressees is blurred even more. Though the actions attributed to the prophetesses (e.g., binding of bands, wearing of veils) are so specific, it is difficult to understand how Ezekiel's audience in general would hear these condemnations. As scholars have wrestled with the description of these prophetesses, many have viewed them has being more akin to sorceresses or witches.[88] This being the case, their bands and veils would have magical characteristics. What is more, readers have struggled to understand whether the bands and veils are worn by the women or by their (male?) clients. At least v.18 is clear that the veils are made for the "head of people of every stature" (רֹאשׁ כָּל־קוֹמָה). Since by participation in these acts, the people themselves are guilty of them (see Deut. 18:10-12, which forbids participation in pagan magic), the blurry referentiality in vv.19-21 might be an intentional use of deixis to circumscribe Ezekiel's audience by these very sins.[89]

Scholars have begun to recognize that gender discord plays a significant literary role in the Old Testament. Ruth is famous for several peculiar examples of gender deixis, but recent work has situated these within the features of literary art. Thus Robert D. Holmstedt analyzes gender confusion in Ruth as examples of code-

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85. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition*, 78-81 (for full citation information, see footnote 43 above); cf. Gary A. Rendsburg, *Diglossa in Ancient Hebrew,* AOS 72 (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1990), 35-67.

86. Aaron D. Hornkohl, "Transitional Biblical Hebrew," in *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew, Volume 1: Periods, Corpora, and Reading Traditions*, ed. W. Randall Garr and Steven E. Fassberg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 31-42. Though note the critique of Rooker's label by William M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period,* AYBRL (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 136.

87. Siewierska, *Person,* 110.

88. E.g., William H. Brownlee, "Exorcising the Souls from Ezekiel 13:17-23," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 69, no. 4 (1950): 371-73. A useful summary of positions, including a new proposal based on comparative texts from Emar, is that of Jonathan Stökel, "The מתנבאות in Ezekiel 13 Reconsidered," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 1 (2013): 61-76.

89. For more on Ezekiel's concern about divination (shared by both Deuteronomy and Jeremiah), see Jason Gile, "Deuteronomic Influence in the Book of Ezekiel" (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2013), 159.

switching or style-shifting. This has the effect of "manipulation of language in order to characterize [Naomi's] speech as a bit different than the audience's."[90] And this gives the book a "foreign or perhaps archaic coloring," although the fact that it happens somewhat sparsely helps this coloring to contribute to the narrative rather than detract from it.[91] A recent study by Andrew R. Davis employs these same features to analyze a number of narrative strategies in Ruth. The narrator uses gender discord to depict Naomi's character (e.g., ambivalence toward her daughters-in-law in Ruth 1 in light of her grieving the death of her husband and sons).[92] He uses masculine plural deixis for Naomi and Ruth in Ruth 1:19 and 22 to highlight "the male roles they adopt in the wake of their husbands' deaths."[93] And he uses masculine plural deixis for Rachel and Leah in Ruth 4:11 to intertextually associate the conflict of Naomi and Ruth with that of the matriarchal ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel, likely (Davis avers) to draw attention "to the tension that still remains between Naomi and Ruth."[94] These examples from Ruth help to highlight the way that viewing gender discord as a literary strategy can open up new pathways toward interpreting details in the biblical texts as we have done with Ezekiel 13.

3.3 Ezekiel 20

Ezekiel 20:1-44 is one of the more widely discussed passages in the book. Like the application of Psalm 105:1-15 to the present in 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 achieved via the shift from 3rd to 2nd person deixis in several key places, and the application of Psalm 106 to the present via inclusion of 1st person deixis (vv.6-7, 47), Ezekiel 20:1-44 represents a retelling of Israel's history so as to address Ezekiel's exilic audience. While many have noted that the transformation of Israel is a central theme in this passage, no one has traced how this transformation is also expressed using formal, deictic features. Furthermore, though some have contested whether vv.33-44 is a salvation oracle due to its "threatening tone," the deixis does appear to cast the passage as fundamentally one of hope.[95]

The unit is delineated by the divine word formula (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר "The word of the Lord came to me, saying") in 20:2 and 20:45. Several sub-units have been identified in the passage, though these do not directly effect the analysis of deixis.[96] The oracle is addressed to the elders of Israel now living in exile, as evident from their

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90. Robert D. Holmstedt, *Ruth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text,* Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 48.

91. Holmstedt, *Ruth*, 73-74.

92. Andrew R. Davis, "The Literary Effect of Gender Discord in the Book of Ruth, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 3 (2013): 503.

93. Davis, "Gender Discord," 505.

94. Davis, "Gender Discord," 512.

95. Pace Block, *Ezekiel 1-24,* 613.

96. For summaries of the different options and new proposals of their own, see Leslie C. Allen, "The Structuring of Ezekiel's Revisionist History Lesson (Ezekiel 20:3-31)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1992): 448-62; and Lyle Eslinger, "Ezekiel 20 and the Metaphor of Historical Teleology: Concepts of Biblical History," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 23, no. 81 (1998): 93-125.

inclusion in the speaking instructions given to Ezekiel. The history of "their fathers" (v.4) is then recounted entirely in the 3rd person until v.27 when the word "therefore" (לָכֵן) introduces a new instruction to Ezekiel, followed by the messenger formula (כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה; "thus says the Lord GOD"). Here Ezekiel is told to address the house of Israel, though mention of "your fathers" (אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם) clearly identifies them with the elders of Israel in v.3. (Note that in v.4, the elders are told of *their* fathers [אֲבוֹתָם].) This begins the description of the transformation of the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 20:27-32 recounts the sin of the house of Israel of which Ezekiel's exilic audience was also guilty. But in v.33, after swearing by himself (חַי־אָנִי, "as I live" or "by my life") YHWH says he will establish his kingship over them by force (וּבְחֵמָה שְׁפוּכָה, "and with poured out anger") and will bring them out from the nations wherein they are now scattered. And though he alludes to the exodus from Egypt in v.35, this time the house of Israel will enter the wilderness (here called מִדְבַּר הָעַמִּים, "the wilderness of the peoples") to be *judged* by YHWH. In this act, oddly described as "bringing you into the bond (מָסֹרֶת) of the covenant" (v.37), YHWH purges the house of Israel of those who transgress against him. By addressing them as "you" (וּבָרוֹתִי מִכֶּם הַמֹּרְדִים, "and I will purge *from you* the rebels"), he suddenly shifts the center of reference. Before this, the term house of Israel was defined exclusively in terms of rebellion. But here the term house of Israel is shown to be broader category, within which are included rebels. But this shift continues on, dramatically and conclusively changing the makeup of the house of Israel.

Though v.39 refers to the house of Israel again with an emphasis upon rebellion, this serves as an ironic intrusion that quickly gives way to an entirely different referent.[97] Upon restoration to the land, this is the result:

> "For on my holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "there they shall serve me – the whole house of Israel, all of it – in the land. There I will be favorable toward them, and there I will request your offerings and your chief portions with all your holy things. As a pleasing aroma, I will be favorable toward you when I bring you out from the peoples and I gather you from the lands where you were scattered. And I will manifest my holiness in you in the sight of the nations." (Ezek. 20:40-41)

On the one hand, these verses demonstrate a complete reversal of themes found earlier in Ezekiel 20.[98] But what is most significant is that the term "house of Israel" has now been radically redefined. No longer the title of a rebellious people, the "house of Israel" now refers to the restored people of God, serving God on his holy mountain, and accepted by God as a truly pleasing aroma. And to underscore that this title no

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97. Rusty Osborne, "Elements of Irony: History and Rhetoric in Ezekiel 20:1-44," *Criswell Theological Review* 9, no. 1 (2011): 13-14.

98. Block notes five: punning on the word דרשׁ ("seek"), transition from defilement to holiness, reversal of the character of the רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ ("pleasing aroma"), shift in God's stance toward Judah (restraint of anger to positive benevolence), shift from estrangement to life in the land. See Block, *Ezekiel 1-24,* 656-57.

longer even refers to the mixed assembly containing rebels as the deixis indicated in v.38, כֹּל ("all, the whole") is used twice to indicate the total transformation that has taken place: כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כֻּלֹּה, *the whole* house of Israel, *all of it*.[99] Furthermore, the passage ends with the house of Israel addressed as "you." In the middle of v.40, the deixis shifts from 3mp (אֶרְצֵם, "I will accept *them*") to 2mp (אֶדְרוֹשׁ אֶת־תְּרוּמֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶת־רֵאשִׁית מַשְׂאוֹתֵיכֶם בְּכָל־קָדְשֵׁיכֶם, "I will request *your* offerings and *your* chief portions with all *your* holy things"). This 2mp deixis is then used throughout vv.41-44, culminating with a vocative "O house of Israel" in v.44.

Since this text ends as it does with the transformed house of Israel addressed as "you," the previous 44 verses are now reimagined. The audience is no longer the elders of Israel presumptuously inquiring of God through Ezekiel. No longer is it a mixed multitude whose rebels threaten to bring down covenant curses of exile and wilderness purging. Instead, the addressee is the faithful remnant, who "suffered exile alongside the rebellious and disobedient," but who had nevertheless "remained true to their trust in the Lord."[100] And though she loathes the sins of the past – *her own* past when considered corporately – the house of Israel will find in this a cause for thanksgiving rather than despair (cf. Ezek. 36:31; 39:26-27). Though Ezekiel 20 has not featured shifts in *deixis* so much as shifts in the *referents* of the deixis, deixis has nevertheless been used to indicate a narrative shift, a voiding of former components of the deictic center.[101]

3.4 Ezekiel 23

Ezekiel 23 has long been challenging for interpreters, taking up as it does a sustained allegory of Israel's and Judah's apostasy using graphic imagery of women engaged in adulterous, wanton sexual behavior. Feminist scholars dismiss this chapter as the remnant of a patriarchal, misogynistic mindset.[102] Even conservative scholars have approached it with a degree of embarrassment for its graphic sexual imagery.[103] One

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99. Thomas Krüger, "Transformation of History in Ezekiel 20," in *Transforming Visions: Transformation of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel,* ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 127 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 168.

100. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets,* abridged ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 279.

101. For narrative concept of "voiding," see Zubin and Hewitt, "The Deictic Center," 141. (For full citation, see footnote 52 above.)

102. Though some have even labeled these chapters as "pornographic," Andrew Sloane has noted that one can only label these passages this way by defining the term "pornography" so broadly as to become meaningless. See Andrew Sloane, "Aberrant Textuality? The Case of Ezekiel the (Porno) Prophet," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59, no. 1 (2008): 69-70.

103. For example Calvin, commenting on Ezekiel 16 (which covers similar, sexually graphic material), apologizes for the content by saying "the Prophet expresses thus grossly what he could have said more concisely, in consequence of the people's rudeness" (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Frist Twenty Chapters of the Prophet Ezekiel,* trans. Thomas Myers [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003], 2:101-2).

thing often missed by interpreters, however, is the way the dramatic variation of deixis permeating Ezekiel 23 aids the presentation of the message.

The chapter is delineated by the divine word formula (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר "The word of the Lord came to me, saying") in 23:1. Ezekiel 24:1 begins with a date formula ("In the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month…." clearly marking chapter 24 as a separate textual unit. Though Ezekiel generally follows the divine word formula immediately with a messenger formula (כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה; "thus says the Lord GOD"), vv.1-21 are prefaced with no such formulae, thereby designating them as historical background to the prophetic indictment to come in vv.22-49 for the sake of both Ezekiel and the reader. Messenger formulae mark the divine speech proper (v.22), as well as subsections within the speech (vv.28, 35, 46). The speech closes with the recognition formula in v.49: "And you shall know that I am the Lord GOD."

The deictic profile of the chapter is dominated by the 3rd person. YHWH addresses Ezekiel via the vocative in v.2 "son of man," and then shifts his address to Oholibah/Jerusalem using a vocative in v.22 employing 2sg verbs and suffixes. The astute reader, however, notices a literary subtlety in v.21 as a shift from 3rd person to 2nd person occurs prior to the new vocative. In context, the juxtaposition is especially peculiar:

> And *she* increased *her* whoring, remembering the days of *her* youth when *she* whored in the land of Egypt. And *she* lusted after their concubines whose flesh [euphemism for genitals] was like the flesh of donkeys, and [whose] emission was like the emission of horses. And <u>you</u> sought out the plans of <u>your</u> youth, when the Egyptians handled <u>your</u> nipples because [they were] the breasts of <u>your</u> youth. (Ezek. 23:19-21)

Greenberg suggests that the shift from 3rd person (indicated by italics) to 2nd person (indicated by underlining) "anticipates the direct address in the next verses…." [104] Hummel likewise sees literary transition as the motivation for the shift.[105] And while a less-abrupt transition is certainly achieved, the deixis itself seems to indicate more: Oholibah herself has been the audience all along! The reader is cued via deixis to rethink the address of vv.1-20, viewing it not simply as background for Ezekiel's sake, but as a condescending reminder to an incorrigible youth.[106]

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104. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37,* 480.

105. Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 207), 706.

106. A similar phenomenon occurs in 2 Samuel 12:7 when Nathan rebukes David: "You are the man!" This identification forces the reader to rethink the details of the parable in 2 Samuel 12:1-4 with this new perspective in mind. See J.P Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel,* SSN 20 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1981), 1:78. Note too that it is possible that the 3rd person plays a social deictic role in this situation, distancing Oholibah/Judah in a patronizing, derogatory manner (cf. Brenner, "Learning the Deictic Meaning," 254-255; Siewierska, *Person,* 222-23).

Beginning in v.36, however, a seemingly haphazard variation of deictic forms becomes the norm through the end of the chapter. Closer examination, however, reveals a method to this madness. In v.36a, God addresses Ezekiel, asking "Will you judge Oholah and Oholibah?" This is followed by a verb of speaking, an imperative addressed to Ezekiel (וְהַגֵּד, "declare!"), the content of which is indicated by a recitative כִּי in v.37.[107] But as the deixis in v.37 is in 3rd person, Ezekiel records this message as indirect speech, thus some deictic irregularity is not unexpected.

From vv.36b-38, the expected 3fp forms are used exclusively: "Declare to them (לָהֶן) their abominations (תּוֹעֲבוֹתֵיהֶן)… blood is on their hands (בִּידֵיהֶן)…." (etc.). Verse 39, however, evinces an unexpected change to 3mp suffixes and verbal forms: "And when they slaughtered (וּבְשַׁחֲטָם) their sons (בְּנֵיהֶם) to their idols (לְגִלּוּלֵיהֶם), then they entered (וַיָּבֹאוּ) my sanctuary on that day to profane it…."[108] In light of the tendency of late biblical Hebrew to neutralize gender in 3rd and 2nd plural forms, some attribute this to historical linguistics/language change.[109] But as the suffixes change again in v.40, it is more likely that Ezekiel has simply shifted from the metaphor of the two women (feminine plural deixis) to the reality they represent: the houses of Israel and Judah (masculine plural deixis).

After briefly returning to expected 3fp forms (תִּשְׁלַחְנָה לַאֲנָשִׁים, "they sent for men"), vv.40-41 then exhibit a change to 2fs deixis. The address seems to have narrowed itself to Oholibah/Jerusalem (her action of sending for men and the description of her bedroom furniture match vv.16-17a), though formally/ morphologically speaking either woman could be the addressee. Nevertheless, the ambiguity seems intentional; the reader suddenly pauses to revisit what he has read in earlier verses in search of data that would arbitrate this question. And while much commends identifying the addressee as Oholibah/Jerusalem, the words are not inappropriate for Oholah/Samaria. The singular deixis continues into v.42a ("the sound of a carefree crowd was with her [בָהּ]"), though this changes to 3fp in v.42b as the drunk men put bracelets "on their hands" (אֶל־יְדֵיהֶן) and beautiful crowns "on their heads" (עַל־רָאשֵׁיהֶן), thus keeping both women within reach of the referentiality. This immediately reverts back to 3sg in vv.43-44a, but v.44b again keeps the ambiguity at hand:

> And they [the drunk men] have gone into *her* (אֵלֶיהָ) as one enters a woman (אִשָּׁה) of harlotry;
> thus they have gone into Oholah and Oholibah, *women* (אִשֹׁת) of infamy.

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107. Thus כִּי should be left untranslated; it serves as the equivalent of an initial quotation mark. See Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 154-55.

108. Note that v.38 may already begin the shift to 3rd masculine plural, although as perfect verbs do not distinguish gender in the 3rd person plural, there is a degree of ambiguity.

109. See Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition*, 78-81.

The parallelism cataphorically links "her" with both Oholah and Oholibah. Though Israel and Judah existed for many centuries as separate kingdoms, their essential unity as the one family of Jacob is underscored.

Verses 45-47 resume the use of 3mp suffixes we witnessed in v.39, however they alternate between 3mp and 3fp forms nearly every other suffix:

> And concerning righteous men, they shall judge them (3mp, אוֹתְהֶם) with a judgment of adultery and a judgment of one who sheds blood[110], because they (3fp, הֵנָּה) are adulteresses and blood is on their hands (3fp, בִּידֵיהֶן). For thus says the Lord GOD, "Bring up against them (3mp, עֲלֵיהֶם) an assembly, and make them (3fp, אֶתְהֶן) [objects] of terror and plunder. And let the assembly stone them (3fp, עֲלֵיהֶן) with stones and cut them (3fp, אוֹתְהֶן) down with their[111] swords. Their sons and their daughters (3mp, בְּנֵיהֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם), they shall kill, and their houses (3fp, וּבָתֵּיהֶן) they shall burn with fire.

This rapid-fire shift of deixis is evidence of the splintering of the allegory; the metaphor of a sexually immoral woman is giving way to their real-life referents: Israel and Judah.

The unit ends with one final variation. Verse 48 states that God's intent is to use the punishment of Oholah/Samaria and Oholibah/Jerusalem to "destroy lewdness from the land." Indeed, the moral of the story is not limited to Israel and Judah, but to *all women*. Yet coupled with this is a final shift toward direct address: "And all women shall be reproved, that they might not act according to *your lewdness* (2fp, כְּזִמַּתְכֶנָה). And they shall sentence your lewdness upon you (2fp, זִמַּתְכֶנָה עֲלֵיכֶן) and your sinful idolatry you shall bear (2fp, וַחֲטָאֵי גִלּוּלֵיכֶן תִּשֶּׂאינָה)." The oracle then ends with the recognition formula, but one that like the masculine-feminine variation observed already, snaps the metaphor fully and finally and enters into the real-world address of Ezekiel's intended audience, Israel and Judah: "And you shall know (2mp, וִידַעְתֶּם) that I am the Lord GOD."

Several features of deixis use in Ezekiel 23 stand out from the preceeding analysis. First, the deictic variation fits well within the idiom of indirect speech where deixis is by nature more varied.[112] Second, the shifts in masculine and feminine deixis make good sense within the context of an allegory of women intended to rebuke and instruct real-life referents (the gender shifts keep that reality in view throughout). Third, the shift from 2pl to 2sg does two things: 1. Highlights Oholibah/Judah as the primary audience of this message. (After all, Samaria had been destroyed over a century earlier!) 2. Merges the distinct kingdoms into their original status; the one people of God, descendants of Jacob.

Commentators have handled the deictic shape of Ezekiel 23 in various ways. Redaction-critical solutions have been criticized. Paul M. Joyce avers: "[A]t this late point in the chapter the clarity of the original allegory is becoming somewhat diffuse;

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110. Note that both "adultery" and "shedding blood" are feminine plural participles.

111. This suffix clearly refers anaphorically to the assembly of righteous men.

112. See Goldenberg, "Direct Speech," 87-88.

but there are no conclusive grounds for judging this material secondary." [113] As he did with Ezekiel 13, Greenberg proposes that the sheer horror of the text led editors (whether Ezekiel himself or the scribes responsible for its canonical form) to leave Ezekiel's original draft in its rough, unedited form.[114] Block suggests that the form of the oracle is intentional and in harmony with its substance, attributing the shifts to Ezekiel's struggle to recount the message or even his ambivalence to it.[115]

In his analysis of Ezekiel 7, Block made an observation that is also applicable here. He suggested that the staccato, abrupt character accompanied by a significant number of hapax-legomenon and text-critical issues in Ezekiel 7 "may reflect the prophet's emotional excitement…. The end is at hand. There is no time to worry about fine literary style."[116] Concerning Ezekiel 23, Margaret S. Odell has cogently argued that "chaos" is a prominent and recurring theme. Block's approach to chapter 7 could thus have been applied here as well since especially in these final verses, chaotic sexual behavior is met with chaotic punishment at the hands of a noisy assembly and a drunken rabble.[117] Into this chaos comes a chaotically structured (though still coherent) message of doom. The alternation of deixis, far from detracting from the prophet's message, gives it a most fitting literary shape.

4. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the fruitfulness of utilizing deixis for exegesis of Scripture. Though often neglected by interpreters, attention to this grammatical feature has given sharper focus to the literary shape of Ezekiel's divine speeches. While this does, of course, demonstrate the indispensability of exegeting the Old Testament *in Hebrew* (much of the deixis observed above is not evident in English translation), it also shows the value of paying close attention to even seemingly small deictic particles.

Exegetes often devote considerable attention to word studies and verse-level syntax, but neglect to study discourse level features. Though discourse analysis has been employed regularly in academic biblical studies, more and more resources are being made available with a more pastoral focus.[118] It is hoped that volumes like these

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113. Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary,* Library of Biblical Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 163.

114. Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, AB 22A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 490-91.

115. Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 1-24*, 756, 760.

116. Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 1-24*, 243.

117. Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel,* SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2005), 305-306.

118. A forthcoming resource along these lines is Matthew H. Patton, Frederic Clarke Putnam, and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Hebrew Discourse: A Guide to Working with Hebrew Narrative and Poetry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming). So too, note the volumes in the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (ZECOT) series, a series which is even subtitled, "A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible." Currently there are three volumes in print: Daniel I. Block, *Obadiah,* ZECOT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015); idem, *Ruth,*

will enable pastors and Bible teachers to more easily assimilate developments in discourse analysis and utilize the emphases and literary shape of the biblical text in presenting the message in their own sermons and lessons.

While this paper has considered only a small selection of Ezekiel, it has served as an introduction to a useful exegetical tool that will aid exegesis not merely of the rest of Ezekiel, but of the entirely of the Old and New Testaments as well.

ZECOT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015); and Kevin J. Youngblood, *Jonah,* ZECOT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).