

**THE INCOHERENCE OF YHWH IN JEREMIAH AS AN OPENING
FOR HERMENEUTICAL POSSIBILITIES: DECONSTRUCTING
TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL ENTANGLEMENTS
THROUGH TEXT-LINGUISTICS AND PSYCHOLOGY**

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Abstract

This article pursues three objectives and is interdisciplinary in nature, bringing together the skill sets of biblical scholarship and psychology. First, it seeks to critically examine the hermeneutical frameworks brought to the reading of apparently incoherent texts in Jer 7 and 8:18–9:10. Why and how are scholars finding meaning in these texts when their exegetical procedures remain limited to the tools offered by traditional historical-critical and conservative historical-grammatical methods? We argue that fruitful theological analysis of Jeremiah's incoherent texts can be compromised when following the hermeneutics of either higher-critical or traditional evangelical schools. Second, we demonstrate that the prophetic text of Jeremiah contains many apparent contradictions and incoherencies that resist being superficially cohered. Here we concentrate on the "incoherent" image painted of YHWH in the book of Jeremiah. Third, we approach the apparent incoherencies of the literary character of YHWH with the psychological theory of affect consciousness and the general insights of psychodynamic therapy. We argue that YHWH's incoherency is not an irreconcilable problem for exegetical hermeneutics, but fertile theological soil. This soil, however, can only grow fruitful insights if one's hermeneutical tools develop beyond the traditional exegete's workbench. Therefore, this article seeks to compellingly demonstrate the usefulness of cognitive linguistics and psychology to a reading of Jeremiah's God.

Keywords: nature of God, text pragmatics, text linguistics, Biblical hermeneutics, Jeremiah, Temple Sermon, literary criticism, textual coherence, textual incoherence, methodology, Affect Consciousness, psychological theology, antithetical rhetoric

Introduction

“I love you—I love you not,” “I love you—I love you not.” Or, more radically, “I love you—I hate you,” “I love you—I hate you.” Much of Jeremiah reads like this. Without investigating the historic and literary contexts of Jeremiah’s text, the reader can be puzzled by YHWH’s speeches like these:

Table 1. Jeremiah 12:8 and 31:3 (NRSV)

Jeremiah 12:8	Jeremiah 31:3
My heritage has become to me like a lion in the forest; she has lifted up her voice against me—therefore I hate (שנא) her.	The Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you (אהב) with an everlasting love (אהבת עולם); therefore I have continued my faithfulness (חֶסֶד) to you.

Additionally, even when the literary structure of Jeremiah’s text is studied, these apparent contradictions do not always disappear. For example, in 3:1, YHWH explains that his people have received a divorce letter with no option for return due to their idolatry and adultery. However, within the same chain of oracles, YHWH invites Israel to return to the covenant relationship in 4:1.

Table 2. Jeremiah 3:1 and 4:1–2 (NRSV)

Jeremiah 3:1	Jeremiah 4:1–2
If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man’s wife, will he return to her? Would not such a land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? says the Lord.	If you return, O Israel, says the Lord, if you return to me, if you remove your abominations from my presence, and do not waver, and if you swear, “As the Lord lives!” in truth, in justice, and in uprightness, then nations shall be blessed by him, and by him they shall boast.

YHWH’s romantic memories of the exodus in Jer 2 are another example. In verses 1–3, he characterizes the Israel-YHWH relationship as positive. YHWH shines as the ultimate lover; the desert journey in Exodus is nostalgically remembered as a rosy honeymoon. However, a few verses later, in verse 20, YHWH speaks of a relationship that has been problematic from “from the early days on” (מעולם).

Table 3. Jeremiah 2:1–3 and 2:20 (NRSV)

Jeremiah 2:1–3	Jeremiah 2:20
The word of the Lord came to me, saying:	For long ago (מעולם) you broke (שבִּרְתִּי) ¹ your yoke and burst your

¹ Several times Jeremiah and Ezekiel use the 2nd sg. f. archaic verbal ending

Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it were held guilty; disaster came upon them, says the Lord.

bonds, and you said, "I will not serve!" On every high hill and under every green tree you sprawled and played the whore.

This antithetical memory of 2:20 later causes YHWH to turn into an angry lion (cf. 25:36–38),² a transformation that leads Amy Kalmanofsky to claim, "God, a direct horror monster, is a mighty force that threatens to shatter and then scatter his victims."³ Conflicting statements, such as these examples from chapters 2–4, do seem to depict either a capricious God who could warrant Kalmanofsky's assertion or a thoughtless, piecemeal redactor. The issue is exacerbated when readers discover these are not isolated examples in the Jeremianic text.

The vacillations of chapters 2–4 are just two of dozens of apparent contradictions in Jeremiah's portrait of YHWH. This has led modern critics to conclude that the book of Jeremiah is unreadable. In 1914, Sigmund Mowinckel captured this frustration; "No man has yet been able to explain this phenomenon by rational means."⁴ Almost a century later, little has changed.

which looks like the תי ending of the 1st sg. c. *qal*: שָׁבַרְתִּי (Jer 2:20), נָתַקְתִּי (Jer 2:20), לִמְדָתִי (Jer 2:33), קָרָאתִי (Jer 3:4), דִּבַּרְתִּי (Jer 3:5), שָׁמַעְתִּי (Jer 4:19), דָּמִיתִי (Jer 6:2), הִלַכְתִּי (Jer 31:21), הִרְבִּיתִי (Jer 46:11). For all cases, see: (<https://shebanq.ancient-data.org/hebrew/query?version=2017&id=3331>). See also, Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Emil Kautzsch, trans. Arther E. Cowley, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), §44h; Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 3rd. ed., SubBi 27 (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011), §42f. Therefore, I interpret the תי ending *qal* forms in 2:20 as 2nd sg. f. rather than as 1st sg. c. This line of reasoning seems to be followed by the NRSV as well.

² In connection with the harsh language and metaphors of horror in chapter 25, Else K. Holt speaks of "fantasies of violence . . . culminating in the horrifying image of Yahweh as the young lion that has left its lair to ravage the flocks" ("King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, My Servant, and the Cup of Wrath: Jeremiah's Fantasies and the Hope of Violence," in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*, ed. Pete A. R. Diamond and Louis Stulman, LHBOTS 529 [New York: T&T Clark, 2011], 217–218).

³ Amy Kalmanofsky, *Terror All Around: The Rhetoric of Horror in the Book of Jeremiah*, LHBOTS 390 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 45.

⁴ Sigmund Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Kristiania: Dybwad, 1914), 4–5.

Robert P. Carroll writes, in the opening lines of his commentary, “The reader who is not confused by reading the book of Jeremiah has not understood it.”⁵ Though the frustration remains, the hermeneutical frameworks used to approach this literary confusion have changed. Different assumptions about text-genesis, text-teleology/functionality, and the reader’s role have evolved over the last few decades.⁶ These assumptions have changed exegetical methodologies and hermeneutical questions.

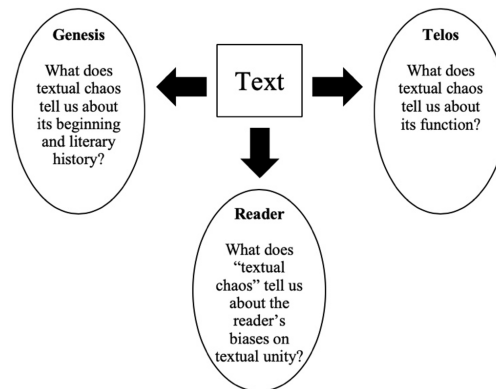


Figure 1. Three Approaches to “Textual Chaos”

⁵ Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, T&T Clark Study Guides (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 9.

⁶ Throughout the modern history of Jeremiah’s interpretation, different frameworks have been applied to make sense out of these contradictions. First, the source-critical framework (e.g., Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* [Tübingen, Leipzig: Mohr Siebeck, 1901]) sought the inconsistency at the very source of the literary production: The inconsistency was a product of the editor’s archiving of contradictory sources. Second, the rhetorical-critical framework (Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 3 vols. AB 21A–C [New York: Doubleday, 1999, 2004, 2004]) viewed the inconsistency, instead, product of the reader who navigates the tempests of Jeremiah, without the ability to see the demarcations within the oracles or decipher the literary skill that produced these texts. Third, with the more post-modern framework (e.g. Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*. OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986]) the inconsistencies became text-anchored again as they reflected the actual currents within the book’s tempestuous water. These “waves” represented the different and, at times, contradictory attitudes toward the national disaster found in the larger exilic/post-exilic community: Studying Jeremiah gives us access to a community in conflict. Fourth, with the twenty-first century and the application of trauma-studies as a framework of interpreting Jeremiah (e.g., Kathleen M. O’Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011]), the effectiveness of Jeremiah’s incoherence for a traumatized reader/listenership received attention. Here the question addressed is, “Why are Jeremiah’s waters (still) flowing?”

There are two central methodological questions. First, “Who creates the textual chaos (reader vs. writer)?” Second, “What function does the chaos have (for both reader and writer)?”

Pursuing both questions, the present research has concluded that not all of Jeremiah’s text is chaotic. Clear literary structures and textual organization are found. The extent of these structures and of the organization throughout the book are still a matter of debate. Present research also agrees that underneath, within, and on top of these organizational structures, the textual sequence is jarring. This shakes the reader and prevents a smooth reading.

With the postmodern liberation and the addition of sociology and cognitive literary studies to the exegetical toolbox, new functional dimensions of the text become accessible.⁷ In particular, O’Connor’s trauma studies have been opening new interpretative possibilities. With her work, the textual incoherence becomes both objective as well as subjective. In O’Connor’s own words, “The book did more than give voice to the afflicted. It was and is a most effective instrument of survival and healing.”⁸ The objective incoherence of the text gives access to the subjective nature of a traumatized community functioning both on the level of text production as well as on the level of text reception.⁹

In our research, we explore the effects of another framework when applied to the interpretation of Jeremiah’s bumpy text-road. While our approach is inspired by O’Connor’s trauma framework, it does not seek to analyze the psycho-sociological condition of the people who have produced this text, or strived to ensure its continuity as an efficient instrument for coping and healing. Instead, it seeks to move *into* the text with a psychological mindset that

⁷ O’Connor writes, “Trauma and disaster studies, and interdisciplinary conversation drawn from anthropology, sociology, cognitive psychology and literary criticism, provide another way to think about Jeremiah’s literary turbulence. More than simply the result of an unwieldy editorial process, the book’s proliferation of genre, image, viewpoint, and discordant temporal notations portray the chaotic realities of the book’s implied audience.” (“Terror All Around: Confusion as Meaning Making,” in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 68). Furthermore, “because the literary parts of Jeremiah do not fit together, because interpretations vie with and contradict one another, because dates are not sequential, because images, narrative, and voices cascade in profusion upon the reader, and because it has no certain ending, the book of Jeremiah mimics what it depicts. The book replicates Judah’s interpretative dilemma in the wake of the Babylonian assault upon its life. To understand the book, therefore, it may be valuable to consider what its confusing literary shape conveys, rather than searching for what happened to pre-disaster Jeremiah, or what Baruch wrote, or how Deuteronomistic thinking made its way into the text.” (O’Connor, “Confusion as Meaning Making,” 69–70).

⁸ O’Connor, *Jeremiah*, 5.

⁹ See also O’Connor, “Confusion as Meaning Making,” 71.

analyzes YHWH as an actual participant *in* the text. Such an approach, we argue, reorients present hermeneutical frameworks so that they become more theologically fruitful.

Therefore, in this article we first want to showcase how the apparent inconsistencies in the Temple Sermon of Jeremiah 7 and the emotionally loaded verses of 8:18–9:10 are theoretically cohered by diverse scholars. By “theoretical coherence,” we refer to the hermeneutical framework that is brought to the text, helping the scholar to make sense of either the coherence of the actual text, or the coherence of the “über”-text.¹⁰ Second, we will show a set of typical apparent inconsistencies in Jeremiah’s portrait of YHWH that were collected on the basis of text-phenomenological research in which text-grammar and text-linguistics define the starting point for textual analysis.¹¹ These collections are qualified by demonstrating the antithetical relationship between YHWH’s anger and YHWH’s compassion, mostly based on chapter 7 and 8:18–9:10.¹² Finally, we want to offer a psychological theoretical framework of interpretation that seeks to make sense of YHWH as a textual participant. In other words, we will present the antithetical nature of YHWH’s attitudes, behavior, and emotions to the psychologist. In this last step, we are interested in a diagnosis of YHWH’s profile.¹³

Samples of Apparent Inconsistencies and Sources of Theoretical Coherence

Jeremiah 7:1–15

The speech introduction in Jeremiah 7:1 opens two speeches of YHWH directed towards his prophet. Each speech starts with a command: first speech, עֲמֹד “stand” (v. 2), second speech, אַל-תִּתְפַּלֵּל “do not pray” (v. 16). Since YHWH commands Jeremiah to speak at the gate of the temple (v. 2), com-

¹⁰ Oliver Glanz contributed this part to the study.

¹¹ For a detailed description of such a method, see Oliver Glanz, *Understanding Participant-Reference Shifts in the Book of Jeremiah: A Study of Exegetical Method and Its Consequences for the Interpretation of Referential Incoherence*, SSN 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 37–126. In addition, it is important to note that, although our approach is critical of higher critical methods, it does not exclude their application by definition. Our method seeks to *order* methods into a meaningful sequence of processes rather than exclude certain methods. The sequence of methods chosen by individual scholars for their analytic operations is highly subjective and does, therefore, depend on each scholar’s hermeneutical assumptions. What our approach suggests, however, is that whatever methodological sequence is chosen, the methodological starting point should always be a text-phenomenological analysis. This type of synchronal reading will best determine what type of diachronic questions and methods a particular text demands.

¹² Oliver Glanz contributed this part to the study.

¹³ Torben Bergland contributed this part to the study.

mentators have generally nicknamed the following verses as the “Temple Sermon.”¹⁴ From a text-linguistic perspective, 7:3b–15 can be read as one single YHWH-speech.¹⁵

The Temple Sermon in chapter 7 has puzzled interpreters due to its apparent incoherence. The reading of the sermon shows roughly three sections: The first section can be entitled *Conditional Hope* (vv. 4–7). It contains a message of hope—if Judah changes, it will not be exiled (conditional prophecy). The second section is a discussion of *Judah’s Immorality* (vv. 8–12). Its message clarifies what Judah does wrong. The final section, וְעַתָּה “and now,” is an *Unconditional Verdict* (vv. 13–15) and reveals that Judah is to be exiled.

As a sermon, one would expect that the speech has a strategy that involves arguments in order to achieve its communicative goal. However, while verses 4–7 aim for a reunification of God and his people by means of repentance and reformation, verses 13–15 reveal a God who has already finalized his judgment over the people. The call for repentance is thus *ad absurdum*. In the final stage of the sermon, repentance, reformation, and possible re-unification are no longer possibilities. The question, then, is how the sermon can form a communicative unit. The table below shows how divided scholars are about the origin and *Sitz im Leben* of the different verses.

¹⁴ From a text-linguistic perspective, however, the temple sermon does not end with verse 15, but continues in verses 20–25.

¹⁵ See the appendix *Text-grammatical Observations on Jeremiah 7*. O’Connor takes a similar approach (*Jeremiah*, 95–96).

Table 4. Different Suggested Divisions of the Temple Sermon

[illegible]

One could organize the different hermeneutical approaches to the apparent textual incoherence into the following types:

Table 5. Different Hermeneutical Approaches to Apparent Textual Incoherence

(1) Incoherence as a product of text production		(2) Incoherence as a product of the “unskilled”/uninformed reader.	
(1a) unintended	(1b) intended		
(vaticinium <i>ex eventu</i>)	(1b α)	(1b β)	[vaticinium <i>ante eventu</i>]
	Vaticinium <i>ex eventu</i>	vaticinium <i>ante eventu</i>	The text itself is not incoherent. The text becomes smooth and coherent once the reader’s skills have improved. The aesthetics of poetry and prose show clear and straight lines and rhymes. And the prophetic theology is straightforward and comprehensible.

Unintended Textual Incoherence (Category 1a: Duhm, Skinner, Sharp)

As the father of critical Jeremiah research, Duhm’s approach to the Temple Sermon has strongly influenced Jeremiah scholarship in the modern age. In his general introduction to the Temple Sermon, he writes,

Reading this speech reveals two things: first, that it contains a major foundational thought, which could not have been easily created by a later editor, and, secondly, that the execution [Glanz: of that major foundational thought] is very weak.¹⁶

He comments on the apparent disruption caused by verses 13–15,

in the proposition of the initial clause of verse 13 the author completely forgets what he said in the beginning of the speech when it was said that if the Judeans were doing well, exile would not come; here the enumerated series of evil deeds in verse 9 is suddenly reason enough to declare the downfall a certain occurrence.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 75. All quotes from authors who originally published in German are translated by Oliver Glanz.

¹⁷ Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 78. His commentary on chapter 7 starts with the remark: “If one wanted to follow those editors . . . one would have to take chapters 7–10 as one sermon which the prophet would have preached at the temple. But the content of these chapters does not at all accord with this imposition, for it is nothing less than uniform, and by no means shows itself as a consistent sermon or even as a speech . . . The MT has sought to connect . . . these disparate pieces . . . but without achieving

Duhm's solution to the problem is predictable. He assumes the hand of a post-exilic writer behind the Temple Sermon. The final verses, then, reflect the fact of Jerusalem's fall and the Babylonian exile, with verse 3 being only "a turn of abstract rhetoric, which could not be missed in a proper sermon and which at best, the later readers could use for themselves."¹⁸ According to Duhm, the prophet did not speak of exile during the reign of Jehoiakim. But later editors (Duhm calls them *Diaskeuasten*, *Bearbeiter* or *Ergänzer*) made exile a central theme, for obvious reasons, for a post-exilic audience. The textual incoherence then, becomes understandable when considering the sloppy work of the redactor(s).

A more elaborate explanation for the contradiction is later developed by John Skinner¹⁹ and in more recent years by Carolyn J. Sharp.²⁰ Contrary to Duhm, Skinner argues that verse 3 and verses 5–7 represent the conditional promise of a later editor, while verse 4 and verses 9–15 represent the absolute prophetic threat of the prophet's ipsissima verba.²¹ Sharp's work did particularly concentrate on the socio-theological assumptions reflected by the different sources that were patched into the Temple Sermon by a later editor. Like Duhm and Skinner, Sharp also does not see a "well perceivable" literary unit. Rather, an "obvious" theological inconsistency is portrayed by the sermon.²² In her view, while verses 3, 5–7 and 9–13a promise salvation under the condition that the call for repentance is answered positively, verses 4, 8, and 13b–15 do not hold any conditional prophecy, but merely the announcement of doom.

Sharp's analysis of these different and contrasting arguments in the text leads her to the conclusion that the strand of text that is critical toward the priests and prophets of Jerusalem, announcing inevitable doom, must originate from the Babylonian exiles (second voice). The strand of text that is criti-

a visible formal unity. Therefore, one cannot consider this speech, i.e. chapters 7–10, as containing formal unity nor content-unity. In actuality, the fact is that in these four chapters the editors have placed—not just one, but several—major interpolations between and within Jeremiah's poems. If the scholarly work is completed, and its results acknowledged, one should be able to detect the poems of Jeremiah amid this wondrous textual mixture and study the later editions separately; but, for now, we have to work our way through the mixtum compositum from verse to verse" (Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 74).

¹⁸ Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 78.

¹⁹ John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah*, *Cunningham Lectures* (Cambridge: University Press, 1922).

²⁰ Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose* (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

²¹ Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*, 170–171.

²² Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology*, 44–51.

cal toward the morality of the Judean people, offering conditional prophecies, must originate from the Judean remnant (first voice).

What these approaches have in common is that they interpret incoherence as reflective of either *different historical circumstances* (Duhm) or as reflective of *different social groups* (Skinner, Sharp). The possibility of an *incoherent* speaker (YHWH) or *incoherent* initial author is implicitly rejected.

Intended Textual Incoherence (Category 1ba: O'Connor)

For O'Connor, the Temple Sermon is a post-fall construct of a traumatized people offering "a strongly authoritative interpretation of the disaster."²³ She explains that Jeremiah's sermons "explain the nation's fall with confidence" and show how "adults try to create sense out of senseless experience. They 'look for causal links and explanations for how and why events occurred the way they did.'"²⁴ Therefore, according to O'Connor, the sermon assumes a Jerusalem that has fallen already. The reference to Shiloh is, therefore, not a view into the potential future, but a reference which:

helps them see what has happened to them without explicitly dredging up their own horrifying experiences of destruction. Shiloh encodes the traumatic violence of the razed Jerusalem temple by conjuring in the mind's eye a catastrophe similar to it. When they look at Shiloh, they see the burned ruins of the Jerusalem temple from a distance, set in a parallel world drawn from the past.²⁵

In contrast to Duhm, Skinner, and Sharp, O'Connor allows for emotional incoherence within a single entity. While single-entity-incoherence is a possibility for her, she does not speak of the potential incoherence within the speech of the actual speaker, YHWH. This is surprising, since she does allow for an incoherent YHWH in 8:23–9:3.²⁶

"Conservative" Approaches to Textual Incoherence (category 1bβ: Longman III, Craigie, Huey, Mackay)

Tremper Longman III, a more evangelical scholar, follows the line of Calvin, who assumes time gaps between the contrasting verses.²⁷ Here the text would

²³ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 93.

²⁴ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 94.

²⁵ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 96

²⁶ See O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 62–63.

²⁷ In Calvin's commentary, the intrinsic challenge of the temple-sermon is not visible, since he treats the three sections in the sequence as separate daily lectures: 26th lecture on Day X (vv. 1–4); 27th lecture on Day Y, following Day X (vv. 5–11); 28th lecture on Day Z, following Day Y (vv. 12–19). Each lecture progresses with references to "yesterday." Thus, the transition from earlier conditional prophecy to the later unconditional verdict receives a temporal nature. While "yesterday" YHWH called for

remain incoherent if the scholar would not read between the lines by adding text-external information. F. B. Huey Jr.'s work on Jeremiah explains that YHWH "had warned them," as verses 4–11 show, but "Now he was going to cast them from his presence," referring to verse 12–15.²⁸ Between the first part of the sermon (vv. 4–11) and the last part of the sermon (vv. 12–15) time has passed.²⁹ Consequently, the Temple Sermon is not a sermon, but consists

repentance, he no longer does so "today." A reading of Calvin's commentary therefore suggests that the move from call for repentance to the announcement of judgment comes after the "Prophet had indeed sufficiently explained himself" (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, trans John Owen, 5 vols. Calvin's Commentaries [Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1850–1855], 1:381).

Calvin appears to sync his own daily lectures with Jeremiah's "daily preaching." This is made explicit when he starts commenting on verses 12–14: "The Prophet confirms by an example what he said yesterday" (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 1:378). Between the different sections of the sermon, time gaps are imagined. These assumed time gaps allow the reader to no longer see any incoherence in the text.

Likewise, Longman does not bring to the fore the apparent incoherence. Rather, he treats the whole passage as belonging to a conditional prophecy, even though the third part expresses a clear verdict. A more favorable reading of Longman could interpret his formulations, "however, it appears that the people are not responding to the word of the Lord" and "the people had plenty of warnings" as assuming time gaps between the three different parts of the temple sermon. See Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NIBCOT 14 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 72. Thus, Jeremiah had been preaching the conditional prophecy of doom (first part), but the people did not listen (second part), therefore—at a later moment—judgment became inevitable (third part).

²⁸ F. B. Huey, Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NAC 16 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 107.

²⁹ What Calvin, Longman III, and Huey Jr. implicitly assume is made explicit in the work of John L. Mackay. He argues that the initial וְעַתָּה in verse 13 "may indicate the next stage in an argument, but more probably here a switch from the circumstances of the past to those of the present - 'but now'. The second word, ya'an, means 'because' (23:38; 35:17). So focusing on the current generation, not Israel of the past, 'because' you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, refers back to the offences listed in v. 9, and shows that the LORD reacted to their behavior, which had been against the norms of the covenant, not by immediate punishment but by repeated warnings" (John L. Mackay, *Jeremiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2 vols., Mentor Commentaries [Fearn: Mentor, 2004], 1:308).

Interestingly, Mackay acknowledges the tension between the texts and explains, "this seemingly unconditional announcement of destruction has often caused difficulties for those who felt it to be at variance with the message of vv. 5–7, where the possibility of repentance was set out, but there is no real tension between them once 18:7–8 is considered. Statements of judgment couched in seemingly absolute terms may, in fact, be made with an implicit condition and are designed to induce repentance. However, if the appropriate response is not forthcoming, then the situation

of two separate speeches given at two different times.

William A. Holladay also assumes a time gap when he concludes that verses 13–15 must be an appendix to the Temple Sermon “added by Jrm after the king burned the scroll.”³⁰ Earlier in his writing, he explains that

The assumption of the present study is that the temple sermon served to close off the first scroll which Jrm dictated to Baruch. . . . Yet the closing verses of the present passage (vv 13–15) imply that Yahweh’s punishment is irrevocable; the possibility is then that vv 13–15 were appended at the time of the dictation of the second scroll, so that the original temple sermon closes with v 12.³¹

It is, however, important to emphasize that the text nowhere explicitly indicates a temporal distance between the different sections, nor does it differentiate between two different addresses (past generation vs. present generation). In contrast, verse 2 does not leave any doubt about the fact that the entire speech addresses the present generation, walking through the temple gates at the time of preaching.

Incoherence as the Product of the Unskilled/Uninformed Reader (Category 2: Lundbom)

Jack R. Lundbom’s rhetorical critical approach has searched to uncover literary patterns that would show the unity of the passage. Lundbom sees three

becomes ominous.” See Mackay, *Jeremiah*, 1:309.

The critical reader will, however, take this explanation as a contradiction to what Mackay explained a page earlier, when he argued that the conditional prophecy was preached to a previous generation, while the present generation received the message of judgment.

Peter C. Craigie’s work on Jeremiah 7 appears to follow a somewhat different strategy. He argues that the sermon is likely abbreviated as it was originally a larger liturgic text, a so-called “torah of entrance” used for liturgies held at the temple entrance. See Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, WBC 26 (Dallas: Word, 1991), 119. Although Craigie does not explain what implications this assumption has for the text incoherence, the reader can assume that Craigie might imagine some text missing between verses 11 and 12. This missing text would make the shift to a verdict of judgment, smooth and reasonable. Thus, an original logic of the temple sermon is assumed, however, this logic gets lost in the process of abbreviating the message. Craigie defends the judgment verdict as being justified “because of their persistent refusal to heed warnings” (Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 122). In this approach, then, it is not imagined time-gaps, but imagined texts that guarantee the coherence of the temple-sermon.

³⁰ William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1–25*, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 248.

³¹ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 236.

different oracles that are connected by means of an *inclusio*.³² Lundbom argues for the coherence of this text on three different levels: First, the text represents a literary unit by containing the same topic (a conditional judgment prophecy). Second, the text establishes a literary unit by its three oracles that all have the form of an *inclusio*. Third, the text becomes a rational unit as it builds a syllogism out of its three oracles (First Oracle: major premise [general principle: vv. 3b–7], Second Oracle: minor premise [violation of principle: vv. 8–11], Third Oracle: conclusion [judgment: vv. 12–14]).

Interestingly, Lundbom's analysis does not allow him to integrate verse 15 into his literary unit and therefore he regards verse 15 as a later addition to a beautifully designed literary form.³³ In conclusion, for Lundbom, the Temple Sermon does not trouble the reader with a lack of theological coherence as long as one is aware that verses 3b–14 consist of a particular literary design. When a verse cannot be integrated into the general literary framework, Lundbom freely uses historical-critical explanations (cf. v. 15).

From a critical perspective, Lundbom's weakest point is his loosely defined *inclusios*, which allegedly demarcate the three oracles. None of the three oracles contain a pure *inclusio* in which the same phrase opens the very beginning and closes the very end of the oracle. Further, the single word that allegedly marks the *inclusio* in the second oracle ("behold!" / הִנֵּה in vv. 8 and

³² See Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21A (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 455–457. Lundbom's oracles follow the following structure:

First Oracle	(v. 3b) and I will let you dwell in this place (וְאִשְׁכְּנָה אֶתְכֶם בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה) ↓ (v. 7a) then I will let you dwell in this place (וְשִׁכְנֹתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה)
Second Oracle	(v. 8a) Behold (הִנֵּה) ↓ (v. 11middle) Behold (הִנֵּה)
Third Oracle	(v. 12a) to my place that was in Shiloh (אֶל־מִקְוִמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁיל) ↓ (v. 14bc) to the place . . . as I did to Shiloh (וְלִמְקוֹם . . . עָשִׂיתִי לְשִׁיל)

According to Lundbom, each oracle existed by itself, as each forms a unit within itself, but the three together lack the coherence necessary to approach them as one oracle (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 455). He then formulates the challenge in the following way, "The question of coherence is this: Can Oracle I be taken together with Oracle III? Oracles II and III yield a coherent thought, in that indictment may certainly lead to judgment. . . . But Oracle I gives the people a chance to "make good their ways and their doings," which, if they do it, will allow continued living in the land. . . . The audience then has a chance to reform in Oracle I; in Oracle III it is given no such chance." (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 458–459). Lundbom then suggests that Oracle I was "recycled from the prophet's earlier preaching during the years of the Reform" (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 459).

³³ See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 455–457. Lundbom argues that "The inclusion in Oracle III supports bracketing out v 15 as an addendum, whose purpose is to render a comparison between Judah and Ephraim."

11) is to be linguistically understood as a discourse marker standing at the beginning of a paragraph to open a new textual section, rather than functioning rhetorically as a closure to a textual unit. In addition, Lundbom's syllogism is speculative.³⁴ There are no explicit linguistic markers that indicate such a design or logic. If the Temple Sermon truly represents a typical, conditional prophecy (see ch. 18) the rhetoric of conditionality is broken by the language of verses 13–15 (I agree here with Sharp).

Summary

The aforementioned approaches all have in common that they implicitly reject the idea of an incoherent sermon as the product of one speaker (YHWH, the prophet), speaking in one moment of time, in one place. They seem to assume that obviously, the origin of the apparent incoherence must be sought elsewhere. The approaches differ in where they allocate the source for incoherence. For some scholars, the apparent incoherence is caused by one speaker who speaks in different moments of time (see Calvin, Holladay, Lundbom). For other scholars, the apparent incoherence is caused by different speakers in different locations (see Sharp). And yet, for others, the incoherence is a product of a traumatized people creating incoherent texts for coping purposes (see O'Connor).

³⁴ However, if one were to follow Sharp's logic consistently, we would see that theological inconsistency can even be found within Lundbom's three oracles. Here Lundbom, in turn, might disagree with Sharp, as Lundbom does not consider verse 4 to cause an interruption in the first oracle, nor verse 13b to produce an incoherence in the third oracle.

Jeremiah 8:18–9:10

Jeremiah 8:18–9:10 presents poetic texts that contain a roller coaster of emotions. The text shifts between sympathies and antipathies for Judah. Some verses express sympathy for the suffering, while others testify of strong antipathy for their wickedness. Conflicting emotions of love and hate change rapidly as Table 6 illustrates:

Table 6. Attitudes and Text-explicit Speaker Identification

Verses	Attitude towards the people	Explicit textual speaker
8:18–19a	Sympathy for (or sympathizes with) the suffering people	?
8:19b	accusation of the people	YHWH
8:21–23	Sympathy for (or sympathizes with) the suffering people	?
9:1–8	accusation of the people	YHWH
9:9–10	Sympathy for (or sympathizes with) the suffering people	YHWH

From a text-linguistic perspective, but also in line with the Masoretic text-divisions, 8:18–9:10 can be read as one single YHWH-speech.³⁵ With some exceptions (O'Connor, Stulman), such a reading attitude contradicts the perception of most modern scholars. In most commentaries, different speakers are identified with the specific emotions represented by the different verses. Table 7 shows how scholars differ in their identification of the speaker for 8:18–9:10.

³⁵ See the appendix under *Text-grammatical observations on Jeremiah 8:18–9:10*. O'Connor takes a similar approach in *Jeremiah*, 61–65.

Table 7. Different Speaker Identification by Different Scholars

Verses	Carroll	O'Connor	Stulman	Lundbom	Holladay	Fischer
8:18	Jerusalem (through Jeremiah)	YHWH	Jeremiah representing YHWH	Jeremiah	Jeremiah	human I (menschliches ich)
8:19a				people (through Jeremiah)		
8:19b						the people
8:19c	later addition			YHWH	YHWH	YHWH
8:20	Jerusalem (through Jeremiah)			people (through Jeremiah)		the people
8:21				Jerusalem (through Jeremiah)	Jeremiah	human I (menschliches ich)
8:22				Jeremiah	YHWH	
8:23 [9:1]a			YHWHb		Jeremiah	
9:1 [9:2]					YHWH	YHWH
9:2 [9:3]	Non-YHWH speaker. Later editor tries to make divine utterance out of it.			YHWH		
9:3 [9:4]		No comment in O'Connor's "Pain and Promise"	YHWH	Jeremiah		
9:4 [9:5]						
9:5 [9:6]				YHWH		
9:6 [9:7]						
9:7 [9:8]	Original non-YHWH speaker			Jeremiah		
9:8 [9:9]				YHWH		
9:9 [9:10]	Editorial conclusion	YHWH		Jeremiah		
9:10 [9:11]	Lamentation fragment of not identifiable speaker			YHWH		

^aThe references in brackets following those in the NRSV differ from the references in the BHS and GT.^bLouis Stulman writes, "God grieves over the destruction of Jerusalem. In uncontrollable sorrow, Yahweh wishes he could cry his eyes out for his poor people (9:1). God's mourning, however, is juxtaposed with rage. The people's corruption inflames Yahweh" (*Jeremiah*, AOTC [Nashville: Abingdon, 2005], 100).

As for the Temple Sermon, scholars categorize it in accordance with the theoretical framework each utilizes.

Unintended Textual Incoherence (Category 1a: Carroll)

Rudolf Smend's suggestion that the poetic "I" in the psalms does not refer to the poet but to the personified community has significantly influenced commentaries on Jeremiah 8:21–23.³⁶ This changed with Hermann Gunkel's work on the Psalms in 1929, as he suggested that the "I" generally refers to the poet himself.³⁷ General scholarship moved back to the earlier assumption that the "I" referred to the poet himself.³⁸ With Carroll's work, this has changed again. After a lengthy introduction to the question of "Who is the speaker?," Carroll settles with Jeremiah as representative of the city. However, he stresses that there is no "oneness of feeling" and identity between the prophet and his people. Rather, the prophet is torn apart. The prophetic speaker shows sympathy for the people while wishing YHWH's judgment on them. With the presence of this ambivalence, it is surprising that, for Carroll, the speaker of 9:2 is not the speaker of 8:21–23, as this would support his idea of a conflicted Jeremiah. Beside the inner conflict of the prophet, Carroll also argues for the inner conflict of the people. YHWH, however, seems incapable of inner conflict.³⁹

³⁶ Rudolf Smend, "Über Das Ich Der Psalmen," *ZAW* 8.1 (1888): 49–147.

³⁷ Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929). A summarized discussion of the poetic "I" can be found in Gunkel's RGG entry on the Psalms (Gunkel, "Die Psalmen," RGG 4:1927–1949), translated later into English; Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, Facets Books: Biblical series 19 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967). The section on the poetic "I" can be found on pages 15–17.

³⁸ See an overview of this development in Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 529–530.

³⁹ Carroll answers his question, "But who is the speaker?" by suggesting that the "most likely speaker is the city (or the community speaking as the city) However, the city as speaker is but a metaphor; in reality somebody has to do the speaking. That somebody might be a priest, a prophet, or a poet. For this reason, a number of commentators treat the speaker as the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah speaks *as* the city." And further, "the personification of the city . . . in such poems does not mean that the speaker speaks his own feelings; he speaks of the city's responses to the disaster" (*Jeremiah*, 235–236).

Interestingly, Carroll's issue is not whether YHWH is speaking of somebody else, but to prevent a superficial identification of Jeremiah as speaker. He writes, "It is an illegitimate move to argue from these poems to the personal feelings of Jeremiah or to cite them as evidence for the oneness of feeling and identity between Jeremiah and his people. The many poems and statements critical of the community indicate quite clearly just how alienated that speaker felt from the community" (*Jeremiah*, 236).

This last remark is particularly interesting since it would describe well the at-

Intended Textual Incoherence (Category 1bα: Stulman, O'Connor, Fischer)

Stulman does not take a definite stance regarding the matter of speaker identification but writes:

Jeremiah 8:18–9:3 sustains the chorus of suffering voices. The identity of the various speakers throughout the book is difficult to determine. The first appears to be Jeremiah who bewails Judah's desperate condition. He expresses great sorrow at the unfolding events. As a divine spokesperson, however, it is impossible to separate Jeremiah completely from Yahweh (8:18–22). . . . Jeremiah represents Yahweh in word and in deep emotions.⁴⁰

Stulman differentiates himself from Holladay by quoting Fretheim, "Jeremiah's grief is an embodiment of God's grief"⁴¹.⁴² Thus, Stulman does not limit himself to the concept of "unity of emotion,"⁴³ separating the empathetic emotions of the suffering prophet from the exasperated emotions of YHWH. In Stulman's interpretation, this passage testifies to a YHWH—potentially embodied by his prophet—with conflicting emotions. It comes, therefore, logically when he writes "Nonetheless, by the end Yahweh himself enters the cacophony to express sympathy for the people (9:1–3)."⁴⁴

O'Connor goes a step further (agreeing with our own analysis) when she considers YHWH as the speaker of 8:23–9:3. Therefore, verse 19b ("Is YHWH not in Zion? Is her king not in her?") and verse 20 ("The harvest has past; the summer is ended and we are not saved!") are the voice of the people of Zion quoted by YHWH in his own speech.⁴⁵ She writes:

titude of YHWH to his people. Carroll argues that the speaker of 8:21–23 is different from the speaker of 9:2. He explains that, "In this poem the speaker disparages the community of its social behavior . . . No setting is provided for the poem, so it may refer to any period in the community's existence, though commentators are keen to place it in the early period of Jehoiakim's reign" (*Jeremiah*, 238) and further, "the poem represents the community as an entity disintegrating under the force of its own corruption . . . A society characterized by such activities is one at war with itself; hence the speaker's wish to leave it and live in a shar in the desert" (*Jeremiah*, 238–239).

Carroll struggles with the same incoherence, but localizes it in the incoherence of the community. We would like to challenge such a reading and wonder whether Jeremiah did not localize it in YHWH. Carroll does likely not accept such localization as he seems to assume that the redactors regarded YHWH as a coherent entity, incapable of showing such incoherence.

⁴⁰ Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 99.

⁴¹ Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2002), 155.

⁴² Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 99.

⁴³ On Holladay's "unity of emotion," see p. 27.

⁴⁴ Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 99.

⁴⁵ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 62.

The reasons I think God is the implied speaker here are several. The primary user of the phrase “my people” is God in the book, and the speaker of the phrase “the Daughter of my people” also seems to be God. And since God is clearly the one who asks, “Why have they provoked me to anger?” in the very next verse (v 19), and because God laments, weeps, and grieves elsewhere, I think God wants to be weak here too. J.J.M. Roberts adds strength to my argument by providing a long list of ancient Near Eastern deities who weep over the fall of their cities. This means the prophetic convention of a weeping god that had a place in the literature of Israel’s neighbors influences the poem.⁴⁶

In addition to this argument, O’Connor suggests the purpose for this divine identification. She writes further:

How utterly remarkable of Jeremiah to echo in a poem about God’s inner being the people’s own stunned, blunted condition. God’s spirit is “leaden,” dismay takes possession, as if god were in a state of stress, beyond recovery. “My heart is sick within me.” Inner sickness and psychic numbing mirror the people’s reality, set it outside them, and summon them to face it.⁴⁷

In a very similar way—seeking to work as closely as possible with the assumption that the final text is a readable and meaningful text—Georg Fischer does not heavily rely in his interpretation on text-external hypothetical assumptions. He formulates carefully and conjunctively (“In der Annahme” and “lassen an Jeremia als Sprecher denken”)⁴⁸ when identifying different speakers. Due to his high view of Jeremiah’s textual quality he also identifies troubled emotions within YHWH and his prophet and does not seek to explain them away. He writes:

This middle section [Jer 9:1–10] introduces a God who—close to despair . . . —seeks to leave his people (v. 1) and who is driven to weep due to the unbearable conditions (v. 9). A proverb says “feelings are not deceiving”; applying this proverb here, means that God’s solidarity with even a sinful people and his compassion for them in even this distress is stronger than all of God’s dissociation and judgments.⁴⁹

“Conservative” Approaches to Textual Incoherence (Category 2)

Lundbom argues for the prophet as speaker of verse 18, the “assembly of my people” in verse 19ab (Jeremiah speaks here for the community), YHWH speaks in verse 19c (through Jeremiah), the assembly of Israel responds in verse 20 (again through Jeremiah), and finally, Jerusalem speaks in verse 21

⁴⁶ O’Connor, *Jeremiah*, 63–64.

⁴⁷ O’Connor, *Jeremiah*, 63–64.

⁴⁸ Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 1–25*, HThKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005), 344, 347.

⁴⁹ Fischer, *Jeremia 1–25*, 349, see also 354.

(through Jeremiah).⁵⁰ Regarding 8:22–9:1[2], he explains, “Delimitation must again be determined by rhetorical criteria . . . The poem, as will be seen, begins at 8:22 and ends with 9:1[2].”⁵¹ Lundbom, then, disconnects 8:21 from verse 22. He argues that “once . . . the speakers are correctly delineated, some very fine poetry emerges—nicely-structured and rhythmically a gem.”⁵² This decision, however, relies fully on what he regards to be a correct delimitation—something that can be questioned, as shown in the matter of the Temple Sermon (7:1–15).

In contrast, Carroll argues that such an approach undermines the structure: “Others prefer to treat the addition as a response to the question, turning the poem from a monologue into a dialogue. . . . It explains the disaster as being due to idolatry but spoils the poem as a lament of the fallen city.”⁵³ Thus, contrary to Lundbom, Carroll does not see several speakers, but just the city being represented by Jeremiah. The challenge for Carroll is 8:19c, as it does not fit his assumption of “one speaker.” He resolves the dilemma with redaction; “A later hand has replied to the rhetorical question in verse 19 by adding an explanation for the disaster.”⁵⁴

Holladay makes an interesting decision on the basis of what he calls “unity of emotion.”⁵⁵ In 8:18–23, he argues that for all cases where we have expression of intense emotions and sympathy for the people (vv. 18–19a, 21, 23), not YHWH, but Jeremiah, is speaking. This is a particularly difficult reading because YHWH speaks in verses 19b, 20, and 22 and the phrase “daughter of my people” (בִּתְּעַמִּי) is used in both verses 19a–22 (Jeremiah is assumed to be the speaker) and verse 22 (YHWH is assumed to be the speaker). In Holladay’s approach, then, there are two different speakers that claim to have “a people.” Following his “unity of emotion” approach, he reads 8:18–23 as showcasing how YHWH has lost all sympathies for his stubborn people and “Jrm for his part is stunned by the collision course on which Yahwe and the people are bent; tears are the only appropriate response.”⁵⁶ Because Holladay follows the “unity of emotion” framework, he also argues that 9:1 shows YHWH as a speaker in contrast to 8:23. He writes:

Volz, Rudolph and . . . Bright have assumed that Jrm speaks in v 1 and have therefore amended those phrases in vv 2 and 5. But this procedure is unwarranted. Jrm speaks the contrary-to-fact wish in 8:23 out of grief for

⁵⁰ Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 529.

⁵¹ Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 535.

⁵² Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 528.

⁵³ Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 236.

⁵⁴ Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 236.

⁵⁵ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 289.

⁵⁶ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 295.

his people. While Yahwe speaks the parallel contrary-to-fact wish in the present verse out of rejection of his people.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The portrayal of the different approaches to the apparent textual incoherence in the Temple Sermon and Jer 8:18–9:10 allows for the following conclusion. With the exception of Stulman, Fischer, and particularly O'Connor, none of the analyzed scholars locate the phenomenon of incoherence in the textual depiction of YHWH. According to their interpretations, the phenomenon of incoherence is located everywhere except YHWH. It finds its place in a messy redaction process (see Duhm), in a society in conflict with itself (see Sharp), in a prophet torn between sympathy for his people and loyalty towards YHWH (see Carroll), and in a discourse established by diverse and contrasting speakers (see Lundbom, Holladay).

Some scholars operate with the frameworks of “unity of emotion” (see Holladay) or “oneness of feeling” (see Carroll) to identify conflicting voices and emotions, matching these voices and emotions to textual participants. Conflicting emotions are represented in the people and in Jeremiah, for example. Where participant identification is not possible, emotional conflicts or incoherent feelings represent the state of the people or Jeremiah, but never YHWH.⁵⁸

In the methodologies explored, we notice the absence of consistency. Noting this absence, we observe the following methodological phenomena: First, the more loosely a rhetorical device is defined within a methodology, the less likely that it can function as a “controlling principle.” Thus, rhetorical strategies cannot prove textual coherence unless the devices are strictly and concisely defined. Second, the more specifically the coherence of theological conceptions (or cognitive conceptions in general)⁵⁹ are defined within methodologies the more textual inconsistencies can be detected. Since one cannot arrive at inter-subjective agreement about cognitive conceptions, we also lack “controlling principles” on this level. Third, both historical-critical as well as conservative approaches to textual incoherence are highly speculative. To suggest different sources or redactions is methodologically no different than suggesting time-gaps or missing information (due to abbreviation efforts). In all cases, some type of lacking data is assumed.

⁵⁷ Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 299.

⁵⁸ Lundbom has made this very explicit in regard to 5:18—his image of God does not allow him to accept the apparent textual incoherence as a product of YHWH's own speech (see end of footnote 86). It seems that scholars only allow for a YHWH who communicates sovereignly, reasonably, and clearly.

⁵⁹ See e.g. Holladay's “emotional unity” (p. 27) and Carroll's “oneness of feeling” (p. 24 and footnote 39).

Due to the inconsistencies in these approaches, we have sought out a methodology guided by objective, consistent text-linguistic markers. Our study arrives at the conclusion that the grammar of the text shows a coherence that calls for a renewed approach to Jeremiah's image of YHWH. We will, therefore, explore the possibility that this grammatical coherence with disruptive logic is not primarily reflecting a chaotic writer (author, redactor, copyist), a chaotic community, or historical gaps, but reflecting YHWH as a textual character.⁶⁰

We show, from a text-grammatical perspective (see *Appendix*), that 7:1–20 and 8:18–9:10 can be read as a grammatically coherent text. The reason why scholars have difficulty accepting the structures of these texts is their content and inner logic. Namely, the reader's image of God as incapable of emotional equivocating contradicts the way YHWH is presented by the text.

In the next section, we explicate apparent textual incoherencies that appear on the surface once a text-phenomenological reading is processed. In contrast to the aforementioned hermeneutical frameworks (categories 1a, 1b α , 1b β , 2), we will not attempt to cohere the text on the basis of theoretical and speculative information, but seek a text-internal solution to the challenge (see the third section).

A Description of YHWH's Apparent Incoherence

We could assemble a long list of apparent inconsistencies in YHWH's behavior, attitudes, and emotions. However, rather than explaining these inconsistencies on the basis of altered historical situations (see ch. 18), we attempt to read the text, text-phenomenologically.⁶¹ We rely only on explicit text-linguistic markers to inform us whether an apparent contradiction is of synchronic or diachronic nature. We remain within the borders of oracles when

⁶⁰ Regarding the temple sermon in chapter 7, we will, therefore, also include verse 16 as part of the same speech situation between YHWH (speaker) and Jrm (addressee) that is introduced in verse 1.

⁶¹ See the approaches of Eep Talstra and Christof Hardmeier: Eep Talstra, "From the 'eclipse' to the 'Art' of Biblical Narrative: Reflections on Methods of Biblical Exegesis," in *Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament and Early Judaism: A Symposium in Honour of Adams S. van Der Woude on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, eds. Florentino García Martínez and Ed Noort, VTSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), xi, 284; Eep Talstra, *Oude en Nieuwe lezers: Een inleiding in de Methoden van Uitleg van het Oude Testament* (Kampen: KoK, 2002); Christof Hardmeier, *Textwelten der Bibel entdecken: Grundlagen und Verfahren einer textpragmatischen Literaturwissenschaft der Bibel*, vol. 1, *Textpragmatische Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003); Christof Hardmeier and Regine Hunziker-Rodewald, "Texttheorie und Texterschließung: Grundlagen einer empirisch-textpragmatischen Exegese," in *Lesarten der Bibel: Untersuchungen zu einer Theorie der Exegese des Alten Testaments*, ed. Helmut Utzschneider and Erhard Blum (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 13–44.

we collect antithetical data, though exceptions can be made when oracles are text-linguistically stitched together in such a way that they invite a synchronal reading. As an example: While the Temple Sermon is usually regarded to end in 7:15, a computer assisted analysis that only seeks text-linguistic markers suggests that the sermon extends until 8:13 (see *Appendix*). Thus, if we are not applying any other theoretical framework to the reading of 7:1–8:13, we have to assume that these verses are to be read as one synchronal unit.

Be My Prophet Versus Be My Prophet Not

Obviously, Jeremiah is called by YHWH to become his prophet (ch. 1). One of the central tasks of the prophet is to act as a mediator between YHWH and his people. The first part of the Temple Sermon relies on this understanding of the prophetic role (7:1–2). The prophet is to bring the covenant partner back to YHWH (vv. 3b–7). However, in verse 16 (“do not pray!”), the prophet is forbidden to mediate for his people (“be my prophet not”):

Table 8. Jeremiah 7:2 and 16

Verse	BHS	NRSV
7:2	עֲמֹד בַּשַּׁעַר בֵּית יְהוָה וְקִרְאתָ שֵׁם אֲתִי-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמָעוּ דְּבַר-יְהוָה כָּל־יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים בַּשַּׁעֲרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַיהוָה:	Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the Lord.
7:16	וְאַתָּה אֲלִיתְּפַלֵּל בְּעַד־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאַל־תִּשָּׂא בְעָדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה וְאַל־תִּפְגַּע־בִּי כִּי־אֵינִי שֹׁמֵעַ אֹתְךָ:	As for you, do not pray (אֲלִיתְּפַלֵּל) for this people, do not raise a cry or prayer on their behalf, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you.

From a text-linguistic perspective, nothing has changed about the historical situation between verses 3b–7 and 16. The reader is still engaging one of YHWH’s speeches to his prophet (see the speech situation with Jeremiah being addressed by 2nd sg. m. forms in verses 2 and 16). Therefore, the cause for the shift cannot be attributed to the development of action or progress of time, but rather has to be perceived as an expression of contradiction in the sermon, itself. There is then an invitation of hope in returning to the covenant, in verse 13, where YHWH concludes suddenly and unexpectedly (וְעַתָּה) with judgment, and the command to cease prophetic mediation (v. 16).⁶²

⁶² Holladay reasons quite differently. While he makes a strong case for intercession being a central and integral part of the prophetic calling (he refers to 18:20[!]; 21:1–2; 37:3; 42:1–6, 20; 44:4; and Gen 20:7, 17; Num 11:2; 21:7; 1 Kgs 13:6; 2 Kgs 4:33; Amos 7:1–9), he seems to believe that a prohibition of being a prophet

They Listen Versus They Listen Not

Beside Jeremiah's sign acts, one of the major prophetic tools is the spoken word. YHWH commands his prophets to speak to the people so that they will hear (7:2, שִׁמַּע). Speaking assumes hearing. According to YHWH's sermon, this hope in a people who are going to listen operates as the essential driving force behind his activity in the final years of Judah's kingdom (7:13, see also v. 25; 11:7; 25:3–4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14–15; 44:4). This שִׁמַּע-assumption makes YHWH's declaration unexpected when he says the people will not listen (לֹא-יִשְׁמָעוּ) to what he is saying (7:28)—and still, YHWH gives Jeremiah instructions to preach. The reader then receives the impression that a contrast of expectations is created: They will listen versus they will not listen. The negative expectation is underlined when YHWH exchanges עַם ("people"

must be understood from the perspective of changing history. Holladay writes, "The chronology of Jrm's career proposed in the present study makes the situation plausible. Jrm was free to intercede for the people until he was convinced repentance was impossible, when the king burned the scroll. At that point Jrm understood himself to be an 'anti-Moses' figure" (*Jeremiah* 1, 253). The fact that the book of Jeremiah knows of the prophet Jeremiah interceding even in his later exilic career is explained in the following way "On the eve of the final fall of Jerusalem, however, when he was convinced there was a hopeful future for Judah (Jer 30:1–3), he could be released to intercede once more, only finally to revert to being the anti-Moses figure when forced to go down to Egypt with the refugees (44:24–27)." See *Jeremiah* 1, 253.

Carroll sees the prohibition for intercession as an editorial repetition (also present in 11:14 and 14:11) in order to "present the nation as beyond help" (*Jeremiah*, 212). Like Holladay, Carroll stresses that the editor assumed that intercession belongs to the fundamental functions of a prophet (*Jeremiah*, 213). However, he remains somewhat skeptical about such a popular understanding when writing, "There is probably much less to be said about the intercessory role of the prophet than is often imagined . . . Insofar as the prophets had such a role it was hardly a routine one, and may have been confined to the northern prophets" (*Jeremiah*, 213).

Carroll suggests a minimalist interpretation when stating that the prohibition is most likely "used in the tradition to underline the wickedness of the nation" (*Jeremiah*, 213). His doubt about the centrality of the intercessory role might explain why he does not see a contradiction in YHWH's command and his call for Jrm to be a prophet.

Lundbom takes a different approach to this contradiction. He argues that the repetitive negation with לֹא indicates that the prohibition is only for the moment and would not mean "do not ever pray again" (*Jeremiah* 1–20, 474). He continues, "Yahweh knows that Jeremiah will pray again" (*Jeremiah* 1–20, 474) and explains, "the point seems to be that Jeremiah is pressing Yahweh more than he should. Yahweh does not want to relent, and Jeremiah's intercessions are made in the hope that he will. In 14:11–12 the prophet is told not to intercede for the people, but he continues to do so, telling Yahweh that the problem is with the false prophets" (*Jeremiah* 1–20, 474).

He continues with comments on the statement "for I do not hear you" (8:16b): "The statement is ironic: Yahweh hears, but says he is not hearing, meaning he is not listening" (*Jeremiah* 1–20, 475). Lundbom does not further explain this irony.

see 7:12, 16, 23, 33) with *גו* (“nation”).⁶³ As a non-listening people, Judah is no longer the chosen nation.

For the reader, a logical question develops from these observations: If YHWH knows that they will not listen, why, then, does he still speak? The close relationship between Jeremiah’s preaching in 26:2–6 and chapter 7’s Temple Sermon (same location, same logic, same vocabulary, same references [Shiloh]) suggests that 26:2–6 provides the actual historical account for Jeremiah’s preaching of the Temple Sermon (ch. 7).⁶⁴ Interestingly, when Jeremiah is called to preach in chapter 26, YHWH does not seem to remember his earlier conclusion that the people will not listen (7:28).⁶⁵ In contrast, by using the word “perhaps” (*אולי*) he expresses the hope that they will actually listen:

⁶³ Holladay argues that they are addressed in 7:28 as “one among many” instead of a chosen people (*Jeremiah* 1, 263).

⁶⁴ This is traditionally assumed by most major commentaries. John Bright states “as is all but universally agreed, this address [refers to 26:2] is the same as that already encountered in more extended form in vii 2–15, often referred to as the ‘temple Sermon.’” John Bright, *Jeremiah*, AB 21 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 171. See also: Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 1–20, 454; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 21–36: *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 284; Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 240; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* 2: *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 26–52*, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 103–104; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah* 1–25, 119; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26–52, WBC 27 (Waco, TX: Word, 1995), 5, 13; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 274–275. However, the above quoted statement by Bright is an overstatement. There are other approaches that see in chapter 26 just one of the many Temple-Sermon-like preachings of Jeremiah. Consequently, these approaches do not see that Jrm carries out YHWH’s specific command of chapter 7 by realizing that particular Temple Sermon in Jer 26. See Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 179. A more nuanced and open approach is followed by Fischer, who works out the similarities and differences without stating a definite conclusion on how these chapters relate to each other historically. See Georg Fischer, *Jeremia* 26–52, HThKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005), 25–27.

⁶⁵ It is important to note that the valence of שמע differs significantly between 7:28 and 26:2–3. While the construction of בקול + שמע triggers the meaning “to obey,” the construction without complement triggers the meaning “to hear” instead.

Table 9. Jeremiah 7:28 and 26:2–3

Verse	BHS	NRSV
7:28	וַאֲמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הָגוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיוּ וְלֹא לָקְחוּ מִזֶּר אֲבִדָּה הָאֱמוּנָה וְנִכְרְתָה מִפִּיהֶם:	You shall say to them: This is the nation that did not obey the voice (לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל) of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.
26:2–3	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲמַד בְּחֶצֶר בֵּית־יְהוָה וְדַבַּרְתָּ עַל־כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵדְבַר אֲלֵיהֶם אֶל־תִּגְרַע דְּבָר: אוּלִי יִשְׁמְעוּ וְיָשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדְּרָכּוֹ הָרָעָה וְנִחַמְתִּי אֶל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי חָשָׁב לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם מִפְּנֵי רָעָם מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם:	Thus says the Lord: Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the Lord; speak to them all the words that I command you; do not hold back a word. It may be (אוּלִי) that they will listen (יִשְׁמְעוּ), all of them, and will turn from their evil way, that I may change my mind about the disaster that I intend to bring on them because of their evil doings.

Thus, what YHWH stated earlier as a fact (7:28), he rejects as a static truth later (26:2–3, see also 36:1–3).⁶⁶ Also, with 7:28, the conclusion that the

⁶⁶ Lundbom translates the *gal* forms not as statements (“who do not listen”) but as past tense (“they did not accept discipline” (*Jeremiah* 1–20, 484). Translating the form as past tense (also done by NRSV, NIV, NASB; however, KJV, NKJV, NAB translate present tense “who do not accept discipline”) takes away the potential contradiction of the present. But this still does not solve the larger problem. Even if the *gal* tense should be translated as past tense, it includes the present state of the nations as simple through the independent nominal clause “this is the nation” (זֶה הָגוֹי). The understanding of presence is further continued in 7:29, where the call for mourning is a direct response to the here and now of the nation's state. Thus, the problem remains, why speak to a people that does not hear? Lundbom's “problem” could be solved if one were to assume—like Carroll—that this is an editorial comment added later to the text. Lundbom's comments on 26:3 (“Perhaps they will listen”) are few. Instead of discussing the contrast of expectation in 26:3 with the parallel account in 7:28, he relates YHWH's hope with chapter 18 and the explanation of conditional prophecy in the potter's house. (*Jeremiah* 21–36, 287). The oversight of this connection with chapter 7 is particularly surprising since Lundbom argues at length that these chapters are referring to the same historical event. He takes an extremely hard stance on this matter, asserting, for example, that Carroll's take on the connection between chapters 7 and 26 is “largely fantasy and cannot be taken with any seriousness” (Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 21–36, 284).

Holladay does not comment on this textual tension and remains silent on the particular connection between 7:28 (“they do/did not listen”) and 26:3 (“perhaps they will listen”). Holladay is similar to Lundbom in this matter, arguing the temple

people do not listen does not stop YHWH from continuing with his address to the people in 8:4. In chapter 36, YHWH commands his prophet to resurrect the burned word once more, hoping it will be heard. As a general observation, whenever YHWH warns the prophet that the people won't listen to him, he then continues to send his prophet to speak to his people in hopes that they might (אולי) listen.

They Provoke/Hurt Me Versus They Provoke/Hurt Me Not

Nowhere does Jeremiah's implied author argue that the people worshipped other gods with the primary intention to provoke (כעס) YHWH.⁶⁷ Idolatry was a means to success rather than a method to provoke YHWH. Wherever matters of idolatry are discussed, they appear to be related to matters of economy and politics, rather than YHWH-religion.⁶⁸ In 7:18, YHWH reads into the idolatry of the people that they worshipped other gods with the primary intention to offend, provoke, and hurt the feelings of YHWH (לְמַעַן הִכְעִי). Consequently, from the reader's perspective, what was not meant personally by the people is taken personally by YHWH.⁶⁹

sermon of chapters 7 and 26 should be read as referring to the same historical event (*Jeremiah* 2, 101–102).

Carroll takes 7:27–28 as an “editorial comment” and not as the word of YHWH (*Jeremiah*, 218). Since these verses are not spoken by YHWH, no contradictory behavior is present to discuss. Also, Carroll does not regard chapter 26 as the historical realization of the temple sermon of 7:1–15. He argues the temple sermon's tensions between conditional and absolute elements in the sermon (e.g., vv. 3–7, 8–15) are not so apparent in chapter 26, but may be discerned in verses 3–6 and 13 (contingent word) and verses 9, 11–12 (absolute word). But the editing of the story makes it impossible to separate out conditional from absolute elements because the Deuteronomistic schema of sending prophets, and their being rejected seals the fate of the city regardless of the response of one particular generation (*Jeremiah*, 515). Carroll does not register or discuss the אולי-clause of 26:3.

⁶⁷ This has been supported by archaeological discoveries. Judah's syncretism did not abandon or reject YHWH worship but integrated it into the religious cults of other deities.

⁶⁸ Idolatry was much more an expression of them being greedy for gain (see בָּצַע in 6:13; 8:10).

⁶⁹ Carroll states, “Such idolatrous cults provoke Yahweh to great anger, though v.19 suggests that any provocation . . . is caused to themselves (to their shame) . . . because people become like what they worship. Yet, it also does anger Yahweh, as the brief oracle in v. 20 asserts” (*Jeremiah*, 213–214).

As one can see, Carroll does not read verses 18–20 as showcasing an inner conflict in YHWH. He rather depicts a non-contradictory matching reality: YHWH is hurt (7:18), but the people are also hurt (v. 19). In contrast to: YHWH says that he is hurt (v. 18) but he also says that he is not hurt (v. 19). It is, then, decisive how one reads the question in verse 19a. We suggest reading this rather as an antithetical state-

Table 10. Jeremiah 7:18, 19, and 8:19

Verse	BHS	NRSV
7:18	הַבָּנִים מְלַקְטִים עֵצִים וְהָאֲבוֹת מִבְּעָרִים אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְהַנָּשִׁים לְשׁוֹת בָּצֶק לַעֲשׂוֹת כֹּנִיִּם לְמִלְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָדָד נָכִים לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הִכְעִינִי: (לְמַעַן הִכְעִינִי).	The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger (לְמַעַן הִכְעִינִי).
7:19	הֲאֵתִי הֵם מְכַעֲסִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה הֲלוֹא אֲתָם לְמַעַן בָּשַׁת פְּנֵיהֶם: (הֲאֵתִי הֵם מְכַעֲסִים)	Is it I whom they (הֵם מְכַעֲסִים)? says the Lord. Is it not themselves, to their own hurt?
8:19	הִנֵּה־קוֹל שׁוֹעֵת בְּתַעֲמֵי מִאֲרָץ מִרְחָקִים הִיְהוּהוּ אֵין בְּצִיּוֹן אִם־ מֶלֶכָּה אֵין בָּהּ מְדוּעַ הִכְעִינִי בְּפִלִּיָּהֶם בְּהַבְלֵי נֹכְרִ: (מְדוּעַ הִכְעִינִי)	Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: “Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her?” (“Why have they provoked me to anger [מְדוּעַ הִכְעִינִי] with their images, with their foreign idols?”)

ment: “Are they really hurting me?—[No!] Are they not rather [hurting] themselves” (הֲאֵתִי הֵם מְכַעֲסִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה הֲלוֹא אֲתָם).

Lundbom sees in verses 18–19 the rhetorical device of the *correctio* where an earlier strong statement (“they provoke me to anger”) is then corrected by means of a negation (like: “no, they are not really provoking me”). But, interestingly, he does not follow such a reading. He writes, “Do people provoke Yahwe with Queen of Heaven worship? Of course they do! But they shame themselves in so doing, which is worse” (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 476).

Lundbom, then, takes the questions as two positive statements: First, the people provoke YHWH, and second, the people provoke themselves. Alternatively, as we suggest, one could take it as a positive and as a negative statement: First, the people provoke YHWH, and second, the people do *not* (הֲלוֹא) provoke YHWH, but themselves.

We assume that the reason why Lundbom does not follow the normal functioning of the *correctio* is because he earlier makes the statement that Deut 32:16, 21; 2 Kgs 21:6, 15; 22:17 and Jer 8:19; 11:17; 25:6 showcase that YHWH can be truly provoked to anger through idol worship. Negating this would be counterproductive for his efforts to argue against Kimhi, Peake, and McKane when writing that they “take the present passage too literally, attempting to explain how Yahweh does not get provoked. Kimhi even glosses over the people’s provocation of Yahweh in Deut 32:21, calling it an anthropomorphism. But that is to miss the point. Yahweh is very much provoked. The people simply do worse by provoking themselves” (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 478).

We agree with Lundbom partially, but think that he misses the point of why Kimhi et al. put effort into arguing for an anthropomorphism (namely because of their ontological assumptions about the being of God). But such ontological disagreement should not lead to compromising the negation found in 7:19: YHWH claims that he was not hurt/provoked. Holladay reads verse 19 in the way we suggest. He argues that verse 19 creates contrast with the last clause of verse 18 “This verse [he refers to v. 19] brings an unexpected rhetorical flourish to the diction of v18. Whom are they really *offending*? Am I the one? . . . No, indeed; they are offending themselves” (*Jeremiah 1*, 256).

Adding to the incoherence here, YHWH appears to argue childishly in the next verse (7:19): Although the people tried to hurt him, he did not feel hurt. Instead, they hurt themselves (הָלוּא אֲתֵם). Ironically, a few verses later, in 8:19, YHWH emphasizes that Judah's idolatry did in fact hurt him (מִדּוּעַ הִכְעוּנִי).⁷⁰

I Break My People Versus I Am Broken over the Breaking of My People

One could argue that in 8:21 YHWH's "incoherence" is not developed over a range of contradictory verses, but is established in one single clause: "Over the breaking of the daughter of my people I am broken" (עַל־שִׁבְרִי בִתְעַמִּי הַשִּׁבְרָתִי).⁷¹ The double use of the root, שָׁבַר (to break), illustrates that the destruction of the people is parallel to the destruction of YHWH. The irony, however, is that the breaking of the people has been caused by YHWH himself. YHWH calls the prophet, in 19:10–11, to perform a sign act that would visualize this future truth. YHWH will break Judah and Jerusalem like a potter's pot.⁷² That YHWH is a potential "breaker" of people is also highlighted in the prophet's urging that YHWH should break his adversaries (וּמִשְׁנֵה שִׁבְרוֹן שָׁבָרָם, see 17:18).

Table 11. Jeremiah 8:21, 19:10–11, and 17:18

Verse	BHS	NRSV/Glanz
8:21	עַל־שִׁבְרִי בִתְעַמִּי הַשִּׁבְרָתִי קִדְרָתִי שָׁמָּה הִחֲזַקְתָּנִי:	Over the breaking (עַל־שִׁבְרִי) of my poor people I am broken (הַשִּׁבְרָתִי), I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. (Glanz)
19:10–11	וְשִׁבַּרְתָּ הַבִּקְבֹּק לְעֵינַי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהֹלְכִים אִתָּךְ:	Then you shall break (וְשִׁבַּרְתָּ) the jug in the sight of those who go with you,

⁷⁰ Carroll argues that 7:19 should be taken as an interpolation. As he writes, "The question in v. 19 by adding an explanation for the disaster. The people of Jerusalem have angered Yahweh by their graven images and foreign idols (in spite of 7.19 where it is implied that Yahweh is not provoked to anger by such matters but it is the people who suffer such provocation). This interpolation may have been influenced by 7.18–19 . . . , but if so, the glossator has not quite understood the point of 7.19" (*Jeremiah*, 236).

⁷¹ The Greek Text does not have the same wordplay as it renders ἐπὶ συντριμμάτων θυγατρὸς λαοῦ μου ἐσκατώθη.

⁷² BHS: אֲשַׁבֵּר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כְּאִשׁוֹר יִשְׁבַּר אֶת־כְּלִי הַיָּצֵר:

	וְאָמְרָתָ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת כִּכָּה אֶשְׁבֵּר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבֵּר אֶת־ כְּלִי הַיֵּצֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִכָּל לְהַרְפֶּה עוֹד וּבִתְפֹּת יִקְבְּרוּ מֵאֵין מְקוֹם לְקַבּוֹר:	and shall say to them: Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break (אֶשְׁבֵּר) this people and this city, as one breaks (יִשְׁבֵּר) a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended. In Topheth they shall bury until there is no more room to bury. (NRSV)
17:18	יִבְשׁוּ רִדְפֵי וְאֵל־אֲבִשָּׁה אֲנִי יִחַתּוּ הֵמָּה וְאֵל־ אֶחָתָהּ אֲנִי הִבֵּיאַ עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹם רָעָה וּמִשְׁנָה שְׁבָרוֹן שְׁבָרִים:	Let my persecutors be shamed, but do not let me be shamed; let them be dismayed, but do not let me be dismayed; bring on them the day of disaster; break them (שְׁבָרִים) with double breaking (וּמִשְׁנָה (שְׁבָרוֹן)! (Glanz)

In addition to the conflicting שבר-language, 8:21 holds another tension. The final clause of verse 21 brings YHWH's empathy for the broken people to a climax when YHWH says that "devastation (שְׁמָה) has captured him" (חֶזֶק in *hiphil*). Jeremiah uses 42 times the word שְׁמָה. With the exception of verse 21, it describes the devastation the city and people are going through (e.g., 19:8; 25:9) or the devastation the land is exposed to (e.g., 2:15; 5:30; 18:16; 25:11). By YHWH applying the word to his own experience and reality, he indicates that his suffering is identical to that of the people, city, and land. Similar to the שבר-language, the incoherence becomes obvious when the reader realizes that the author of שְׁמָה (devastation) is YHWH himself. With 8:21, the horror YHWH has caused to the people causes him to be horrified. The author of horror, then, goes through horror himself.

This contrast is also found between 8:18 and verse 19b. While YHWH accuses Judah of hurting him, he weeps in the preceding verse, verse 18, that his heart is hurting because of the destruction the people go through (as response to v. 17).

I Want to Stay Versus I do Not Want to Stay

In 8:23, the speaker expresses his earnest wish to lament over his beloved people forever. Since no location for mourning (e.g., battlefield, graves) is mentioned, one cannot deduce from verse 23 that YHWH's lamenting takes place at a location where the dead corpses are found or buried. However, the dead occupy a mental space in the divine mourning. If not geographically, YHWH seeks at least mentally to be close to the absence of those lives he has sought to partner with.

Table 12. Jeremiah 8:23 and 9:1

Verse	BHS	NRSV
8:23[9:1]	מִי־יִתֶּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם וְעֵינַי מְקוֹר דְּמָעָה וְאֶבְכָּה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה אֶת חֲלָלֵי בִתְעָמִי:	O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!
9:1[2]	מִי־יִתֶּנִּי בַּמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אֲרָחִים וְאֶעֱזָבָה אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֶלְכָה מֵאַתָּם כִּי כָלָם מְנַאֲפִים עֹשֵׂרֵת בְּגָדִים:	O that I had in the desert a traveler's lodging place, that I might leave my people and go away from them! For they are all adulterers, a band of traitors.

However, as a direct antithesis, the speaker wishes to leave (geographically and mentally) his adulterous people as quickly as possible in 9:1 (BHS). This contrast is caught by the eye, as both 8:23 (BHS) and the following verse of 9:1 (BHS) start with the same question, tense, and predicate (מִי־יִתֶּן versus מִי־יִתֶּנִּי). Elsewhere, I have shown that interrogatives can indicate a shift in speech situation (shift of speaker or shift of addressees).⁷³ Thus, 9:1 (BHS) could initiate the speaking of a different speaker. In this case, 8:23 (BHS) and 9:1 (BHS) would not need to be read as a contradiction within the same speech but a contrast between the speech of two different speakers. However, such interpretation is rather unlikely: First, in both verses, the same question is asked, “Who gives” (מִי + נָתַן). Second, in both verses the 1st sg. c. reference is identical and established by the same direct object “my people” (אֶת חֲלָלֵי versus אֶת־עַמִּי).

The only explicit identification of the first-person references in this section is made with YHWH. Thus, the reader—without the directives of an external theoretical framework—will identify YHWH as the author of both wishes.⁷⁴

O'Connor arrives at the same conclusion and writes regarding 8:23:

There is no way to repair this unspeakable shattering. The only thing left to do is weep. And in one of the more moving poetic lines of the book, God longs to do so:

Who will make my head water and my eyes a fountain of tears, That I
might weep day and night for the slain of the Daughter of my people?
(8:22, Eng.) . . .

Desire to grieve is so strong . . . God wishes to become waters. Only such a source would provide sufficient tears to grieve what has been lost and broken.⁷⁵

⁷³ See Glanz, *Understanding Participant-Reference Shifts*, 246, 300, 304, 309–310.

⁷⁴ Holladay offers different datings for the different passages so that no apparent incoherence must be explained. For how commentators see the connections within 8:23–9:9, see the section entitled *Jeremiah* 8:18–9:10.

⁷⁵ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 64.

Since O'Connor also takes YHWH to be the speaker of the antithetical verses in 9:1–3, she concludes,

Divine rage and grief are two aspects of the same broken relationship. In an act of theological license, Jeremiah's poem imagines numbness and seething anger in God's being, if I am right about the identity of the speaker. Distraught and unstable, God is like victims of traumatic violence.⁷⁶

They Are Evildoers Versus They Are Victims

In 8:23–9:8, YHWH alternates between picturing his people as victims of war (8:21), which initiates laments of empathy, and describing his people as radical criminals (9:1–5) who deserve punishment (v. 8).

Table 13. Jeremiah 8:21 and 9:1–8

Verse	BHS	NRSV
8:21	עַל־שָׁבֶר בְּתַעֲמִי הִשְׁבַּרְתִּי קִדְרֹתִי שָׁמָּה הִחֲזַקְתִּנִּי:	For the hurt (עַל־שָׁבֶר) of my poor people I am hurt (הִשְׁבַּרְתִּי), I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.
9:1–8[2–9]	מִי־יִתְּנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אַרְחִים וְאֶעְזְבָה אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֵלֶכָה מֵאַתָּם כִּי כָל־ מְנַאֲפִים עֲצָרַת בְּגָדִים: וַיִּדְּכּוּ אֶת־לְשׁוֹנָם כְּשֵׁתִם שָׁקֶר וְלֹא לְאֱמוּנָה גָּבְרוּ בְּאָרֶץ כִּי מִרְעָה אֶל־דָּעָה יֵצְאוּ וְאֹתִי לֹא־יָדְעוּ נְאֻם־ יְהוָה: אִישׁ מִרְעָהוּ הִשְׁמָרוּ וְעַל־כָּל־אָח אֶל־תִּבְטְחוּ כִּי כָל־אָח עֲקוּב יַעֲקֹב וְכָל־רֵעַ רֵכִיל יִהְיֶה: וְאִישׁ בִּרְעָהוּ יִהְתָּלוּ וְאֶמֶת לֹא יִדְּבְרוּ לְמַדּוּ לְשׁוֹנָם דִּבְרֵ־שָׁקֶר הֵעִיזוּ נִלְאוּ: שִׁבְתָּד בְּתוֹד מִרְמָה בְּמִרְמָה מָאֲנוּ דַעַת־אוֹתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: ...	O that I had in the desert a traveler's lodging place, that I might leave my people and go away from them! For they are all adulterers, a band of traitors. They bend their tongues like bows; they have grown strong in the land for false- hood, and not for truth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, says the LORD. Beware of your neighbors, and put no trust in any of your kin; for all your kin are sup- planters, and every neighbor goes around like a slanderer. They all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent. Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the LORD. ...

⁷⁶ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 65.

הֲעֵלֶי־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם	Shall I not punish them (לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם) for
נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־	these things? says the LORD; and shall
כָּזֶה לֹא תִתְּנָם נַפְשִׁי:	I not bring retribution on a nation (בְּגוֹי)
	such as this?

The alternation continues as the antipathy transforms into empathy for the judged in 9:9,⁷⁷ and then returns to antipathy in verse 10.

I Will Take Care of Them (Destruction) Versus
I will Take Care of Them (Providence)

Tracing the *qal*-usage of the word פקד in Jeremiah reveals an additional “incoherence” in the speaking of YHWH. In the *qal* stem פקד can mean “to take care” in the positive or negative sense.⁷⁸ The meaning difference relies on the actual context, as it cannot be determined on the basis of valence behavior or syntax.⁷⁹ In 9:8, YHWH asks whether the immorality of his people would not require a divine care-taking (הֲעֵלֶי־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם) of them (the same question can be found in 5:29a). That פקד does not hold a positive meaning here becomes clear later in 9:24–25 (וּפְקֹדֹתַי עַל־כָּל־מוֹל בְּעָרֶיֶּהָ; see also 5:29b; 6:6, 15; 11:22; 14:10; 21:14; 23:2, 34; 27:8; 29:32; 36:31; 44:13, 29). To “take care of” the house of Israel means to bring judgment over them. In later chapters, YHWH promises to once again take care of Judah. On these occasions, פקד means to watch over/protect (29:10, see also 32:5 [Carroll “to visit graciously”]⁸⁰). YHWH protects and takes care of Judah by taking care of Babylon and all other nations who have suppressed Judah (see 25:12; 27:8; 30:20; 46:25; 49:8; 50:18, 31; 51:44, 47, 52).⁸¹

⁷⁷ O’Connor agrees that it is YHWH who is weeping for the shattered people (*Jeremiah*, 65).

⁷⁸ In a positive sense, פקד + Obj can be used synonymously with זכר when YHWH remembers mankind to redeem them (Exod 4:31; Ruth 1:6; Pss 8:5; 65:10). In a negative sense, it is used for describing judgment and executing revenge (Exod 34:7). See also G. André, “פקד, Pagad” *TDOT* 12:50–63.

⁷⁹ In both cases פקד comes with a direct object as complement.

⁸⁰ Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 619.

⁸¹ We find the same spectrum of meaning for פקד in regard to Jeremiah as prophet. In 15:15, we have the positive meaning to “watch over” or “take care of.” The prophet urges YHWH to watch over him and take care of him. In contrast, Jeremiah is taken care of—in a negative sense—in 37:21 (וַיִּפְקְדוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ).

Table 14. Jeremiah 9:8 and 29:10

Verse	BHS	NRSV
9:8[9]	הֲעֲלֶאֱלֹה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־ כָּזֶה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשִׁי:	Shall I not punish (אֶפְקֹד) them for these things? says the LORD; and shall I not bring retribution on a nation such as this?
29:10	כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי לְפִי מְלֹאת לְבַבְלִי שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהִקְמַתִּי עָלַי־ כֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַטּוֹב לְהָשִׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה:	For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit (אֶפְקֹד) you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.

Obviously, the hermeneutical frameworks discussed in the first section are what cohere these inconsistencies on the basis of text-external, theoretical assumptions.⁸²

I Will Finish Them Versus I Will Finish Them Not

In 8:12b–14 and 17, YHWH makes strong statements planning to take care (פְּקֻדָּה) of his people. This care-taking is not seeking preservation, but eradication. YHWH plans to finish his people. As a result of his judgment, they will be completely destroyed. YHWH shocks the reader with the post-harvest image of a vine where no grapes are left and a fig tree that is without figs. With the repetitive use of the negation לֹא, a radical harvest is pictured. In verse 13, the infinitive absolute emphasizes this further. I will surely collect (all) of them (אָף אֵיפֶם)! The response of the people in verse 14 shows that YHWH's words are taken as intentional and that even the cities cannot be protected from certain death.⁸³ The horrific imagery of YHWH going out to

⁸² For Carroll, these references are not prophetic but post-reflective and do not paint a disruptive image of YHWH. Commenting on 29:10, he states, "Here the addition corrects the view that exile in Babylon is to be permanent" (*Jeremiah*, 553, see also 619). Holladay, however, sees no reason why this material should not be authentically prophetic (*Jeremiah* 2, 137, 139). At the same time, he solves the apparent contradiction historically by explaining how chapter 29 is a letter sent to the exiles (the negative version of פְּקֹד has taken place already) and chapter 32 is prophesied on the ruins of Jerusalem. Lundbom treats these sections similarly. "Older and also more recent attempts" of source critical and redaction critical attempts "to date portions of the chapter in the postexilic period" are without warrant (*Jeremiah* 21–36, 501). He sees Baruch as the faithful follower who was "entrusted with the safekeeping of the prophecy . . . it is just as clear that the chapter contains a structure that has gone unrecognized by those dividing it into sources" (*Jeremiah* 21–36, 501). Thus, the account is a faithful, contiguous passage. For 29:10, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 21–36, 359–360. Yet, for him, it seems there is a historical gap between positive and negative uses of פְּקֹד.

⁸³ Interestingly, the same word for collecting is used in 8:14 as in verse 13 (YHWH

finish his people is painted in starker terms in verse 14b. YHWH goes out to poison his people with toxic water and sends poisonous snakes whose lethal bites lead to an agonizing death with no antidote in sight (in contrast to Num 21:4-9). The language used is clear; there will be no survivors. YHWH will “finish them off,” because his wrath is comprehensive in scope. After a short interruption in Jer 8:18–23,⁸⁴ 9:15 returns to the language of rage when YHWH declares that he will finish (כלה) them (פְּלוֹתֵי אוֹתָם), see the verbal form of כלה used also in 14:12; 16:4; 44:27). These strong pronouncements are contradicted when Jeremiah uses the nominal form of (כֹּלֵה) כלה in negated form, foretelling that he will “not finish them,” literally, “And not I will finish [you]!” (לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה כֹּלֵה).⁸⁵ This apparent inconsistency is not only found in those oracles that discuss the state and future of Judah. It can also be found in the oracles against the foreign nations where the antithetical statements are made within the same context:

speech). While in verse 13 YHWH collects the people, the people collect themselves in verse 14. In both cases, the collection leads to death and final eradication.

⁸⁴ See *Appendix* for same-speaker argumentation.

⁸⁵ See Jer 4:27; 5:10, 18; 30:11; 46:28; etc.

Table 15. Jeremiah 44:27, 28; 48:35, 47; and 49:37, 39

Verse	BHS	NRSV/Glanz
44:27	הֲגִנִּי שָׁקֵד עֲלֵיהֶם לְרָעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה וְתָמוּ כָּל־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ־ מִצְרַיִם בְּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב עַד־כְּלוֹתָם:	I am going to watch over them for harm and not for good; all the people of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall perish by the sword and by famine, until they are finished off (עַד־כְּלוֹתָם). (Glanz)
44:28	וּפְלִיטֵי חֶרֶב יָשׁוּבוּן מִן־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה מִתִּי מִפָּר וַיָּדְעוּ כָּל־שְׂאֵרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים לְאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם לְגוֹר שָׁם דְּבַר־מִי יָקוּם מִמֶּנִּי וּמֵהֶם:	And those who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, few in number; and all the remnant of Judah, who have come to the land of Egypt to settle, shall know whose words will stand, mine or theirs! (NRSV)
48:35	וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי לְמוֹאָב נָאִם־ יְהוָה מַעֲלָה בָּמָה וּמִקְטִיר לְאֱלֹהֵיוּ:	And I will bring to an end in Moab (וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי לְמוֹאָב), says the Lord, those who offer sacrifice at a high place and make offerings to their gods. (NRSV)
48:47	וְשִׁבַּתִּי שְׁבוּת־מוֹאָב בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים נָאִם־יְהוָה עַד־הֵנָּה מִשְׁפֹּט מוֹאָב:	Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab (וְשִׁבַּתִּי שְׁבוּת־מוֹאָב) in the latter days, says the Lord. Thus far is the judgment on Moab. (NRSV)
49:37	וְהִחַתַּתִּי אֶת־עֵילָם לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּלִפְנֵי מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְהִבֵּאתִי עֲלֵיהֶם רָעָה אֶת־חֶרֶוֹן אֲפִי נָאִם־ יְהוָה וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב עַד כְּלוֹתִי אוֹתָם:	I will terrify Elam before their enemies, and before those who seek their life; I will bring disaster upon them, my fierce anger, says the Lord. I will send the sword after them, until I have finished them (עַד כְּלוֹתִי אוֹתָם); (Glanz)
49:39	וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים אֲשׁוּב אֶת־שְׁבִית עֵילָם נָאִם־יְהוָה:	But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes (אֲשׁוּב אֶת־שְׁבִית) of Elam, says the Lord. (NRSV)

Jeremiah proclaims to the Egyptian exiles in 44:27 that YHWH will hunt them down until he has finished them (עַד־כְּלוֹתָם) with sword and famine. However, the very next verse (v. 48), foretells that he will not finish them but return a remnant (שְׂאֵרֵי יְהוּדָה) to the land of Judah.

In the oracles against Moab and Elam, YHWH predicts that he will make an end to them (Jer 48:35 [Moab]: וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי לְמוֹאָב; Jer 49:37 [Elam]: וְהִחַתַּתִּי אֶת־עֵילָם לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם). At the end of those oracles, YHWH predicts that he will, in the end, turn from their fate of final destruction (Jer 48:47 [Moab]: וְשִׁבַּתִּי שְׁבוּת־מוֹאָב; Jer 49:39 [Elam]: אֲשׁוּב אֶת־שְׁבִית עֵילָם).

Again, the hermeneutical frameworks discussed in the first section of this paper are what cohere these inconsistencies on the basis of text-external, theoretical assumptions.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ If Holladay is right, and the foretelling of the new covenant in chapters 30–33 takes place after Judah and Jerusalem have fallen, YHWH stresses that he will not finish them (30:11: לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּלָה) after he “has finished” Judah and Jerusalem. Higher critical scholars read this contradiction similarly, however, from a *vaticinium ex eventu* perspective. The surviving Golah testifies that YHWH did not finish them, thus the claim “I will not finish them/you” is a product of (post)exilic times. Holladay et al. do not apply such an interpretation to the oracles against Moab and Elam. In 4:27, Holladay allows for Rudolph’s suggestion to delete the negation (see Wilhelm Rudolph’s suggestion in the critical apparatus of the BHS; also Wilhelm Rudolph, *Jeremia*, HAT 12 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1958], 32). As a general judgment, Holladay assumes that the phrase (with or without negation) “may have been a standard phrase.” If that is the case, he adds that “part of the horror of the phrase may be that it is a ‘near miss’ on a phrase that the people would much prefer to have heard, a phrase into which the *M* in its vocalization slipped” (*Jeremiah* 1, 167). In 5:10, Holladay follows the advice of Rudolph once again, more consistently than Carroll, when he suggests the negation should be deleted (Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 186; see also Rudolph’s suggestion in the apparatus of the BHW, and Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 34). Thus, no contradiction in YHWH’s speaking can be recognized. Regarding 5:18, Holladay argues Jer 5:18, with its negation, is intended “to mitigate the terrible finality of vv 10–17. It reflects a text of v 10 without the negative now present: the terrible weight of Yahweh’s judgment lay upon the people, and the question must have been severe whether the word of v 10 was the last word from Yahweh. There was, however, the counterbalancing perception that the people were not quite destroyed and the conviction that Yahweh did not intend them to be (a conviction reinforced by 30:11). This word of mitigation is inserted here as a current word from Yahweh. A setting early in the exilic period is appropriate” (*Jeremiah* 1, 190).

While Holladay suggests that 5:18 is a later insertion, he wants to make sure that this does not mean that it is inauthentic. “It is therefore not legitimate to argue the inauthenticity of v 19 (as Rudolph, Hyatt, and Bright do) because of the inauthenticity of v 18” (*Jeremiah* 1, 190). Thus, while both 5:10 (without negation, according to Holladay) and verse 18 are contradictory statements, they are both authentically prophetic with YHWH as author, but separated by time. This is how the otherwise apparent contradiction is solved. However, nowhere does verse 18 show a deictic marker that would suggest it as a later addition. The later addition only seems to be suggested on the basis that if it is not there, there would be a contradiction. For 30:11, Holladay sees a prophecy on the ruins of Jerusalem. This is in line with his understanding of 29:14, where the promise of restoration is given to the exiles and thus not before exile has taken place (*Jeremiah* 2, 142). When it comes to 48:47 and 49:39, he only refers back to the same phrase being used in 29:14. Since he argues that the promise of restoration is authentic in verse 14, we can assume that he would claim the same for the end of the oracle against Moab and Elam. However, no explicit discussion is found there. He does not address the contradictory statements in these oracles. If we would assume that Holladay treats the oracles against Moab and Elam in the same way as the oracles

against Judah, we would conclude that there is a time gap between 48:35/49:37 and 48:47/49:37 with the latter being a prophecy given during the exile of Moab and Elam. There is neither textual nor historical evidence to support such speculation.

For Carroll, “I will not make an end” is “from a later period which knew of a survival of the destruction” so there is no contradiction (for 4:27, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 170. For 5:10, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 181). While Carroll follows Rudolph’s suggestion to delete the negation in 4:27 (since the negation would have been added by a later redactor and was not part of the more original text), Carroll does not do so for 5:10. Here, Carroll wants to see the voice of the survivors as an authentic text. (For a discussion, see also Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 186). In all this, Carroll acknowledges that the text contains tensions in its final form. These tensions are, however, explained diachronically and not synchronically as reflecting a people in interpretative conflict (or reflecting a traumatized people—as in O’Connor’s approach). Carroll’s approach is consistent, as the negations are always authored by the surviving remnant.

For 30:11, he argues again that the “I will not make a full end” is a post-destruction voice of one of the many traditions found in Jeremiah. Carroll argues that “hints of this belief can be found in Part I of the tradition (cf. 4.27b; 5:10, 18) and, although ambiguous, give rise to certain tensions within the text here. The different streams which feed the tradition provide the formal elements of these contradictions, but the communities which developed the traditions were no doubt able to resolve the difficulties to their own satisfaction” (*Jeremiah*, 579). This reasoning is not completely consistent since he argues for a deletion of the negation in 5:10, while embracing the negation in his comments on 30:11 as the voice of the surviving remnant.

Overall, his approach is as inconsistent as Holladay’s since he does not apply his strategy to the oracles of Moab and Elam. Regarding both 49:39 and 48:47, Carroll argues that the “annihilation is reversed to some extent by the addition of a brief oracle” (*Jeremiah*, 814; see also 796). It is almost ironic that he unites these “different” oracles explaining, “Such an appendix indicates how rhetorical the language . . . is” (*Jeremiah*, 814). If this is a rhetoric of reversal, why not accept the antithetical statements as belonging to one and the same oracle? Once this is accepted, all the earlier negations, “and end I will not make,” could belong to the very same rhetoric.

Lundbom does not follow Carroll with redaction-critical suggestions. In 4:27, instead of offering a definite reading, Lundbom chooses to survey the different corrected readings and suggestions, along with the problems that come with it. When he offers his own interpretation, he assumes the presence of the negation. Referring to texts like Exod 32:9, 14 and Deut 32:26–27 and Calvin’s reading, he seems to prefer the rendering of the question, “Will you make a full end?” in the presence of a prophecy of judgment (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 361–362). Obviously, Lundbom hesitates to delete the negotiations. This is particularly evident in his treatment of Jer 5:18, where his theological ties guide his interpretative process. For verse 18, Lundbom struggles to find a best rendering. He is uncomfortable with a rendering that deletes the negation or stresses that the present judgment is not yet enough and more will come. He skeptically concludes that “to say that he [i.e. YHWH] intends to do the same in future days (and continue with his punishment) is too harsh to be credible” (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 397). The consequences of such a reading would be a contradiction in YHWH’s speaking. Such a contradiction is not further explored. His approach is

Conclusion

With the exception of O'Connor, and at times Stulman, the listed incoherencies and apparent contradictions are generally not processed theologically by scholars. Essentially, these antithetical statements are neutralized by most higher-critical scholars and conservative scholars alike. They make these contradicting statements represent different historical situations (different times cause different divine/human speeches), different locations (exiles in Babylon "create" different divine voices than the remnant in Jerusalem), or the theological voices of different, disagreeing social entities. This agreement, across the hermeneutical spectrum, in harmonizing antithetical voices raises serious methodological questions. Although our approach differs (and disagrees on some a priori level) from O'Connor's trauma-framework of interpretations, we agree when she writes,

I am suspicious of commentators who do not want a weeping God, a poetic character with human-like emotions. Perhaps such a God may not appear godly or macho enough. Perhaps a weeping deity is too vulnerable. But a weeping God, like an angry one, arises from human experience to name the One beyond every name.⁸⁷

We, then, explore a different route for dealing with these apparent contradictions. Instead of removing the inconsistencies through a diversity of text-external assumptions (different times, different locations, different text-internal speakers, different authors/redactors, different social groups, traumatized

not consistent because for verse 10 and the oracles against Moab and Elam he allows for later additions. Regarding verse 10, Lundbom is not clear on whether to retain or delete the negation. With his reference to Calvin, he seems to allow for (prefer?) the idea that the negation is absent and that "Remnant theology comes later" (*Jeremiah 1–20*, 388). With regard to the oracles against Moab and Elam, 48:47/49:39, Lundbom accepts the possibility of the restoration at the end of the oracles as being a "later add-on" (*Jeremiah 37–52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21C [New York: Doubleday, 2004], 311). However, he stresses that such restoration promises are "integral to laments and judgment oracles. Dobbs-Allsopp . . . has shown that a concluding restoration word is common in the ancient Mesopotamian city laments" (*Jeremiah 37–52*, 311). If this is the case, we would have to assume that these contradictory statements are part of a general rhetoric and could therefore represent a unified oracle. Lundbom stresses this in 49:39, arguing explicitly against Holladay's suggestions that the verse should be omitted, because "restoration promises are known to be more integral to judgment oracles and laments than was formerly imagined" (*Jeremiah 37–52*, 363). Thus, the contradiction would not indicate different oracles or later add-ons, but authorial intent.

An excellent discussion of the hermeneutical biases at work can be found in Walter Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones: Listening for the Prophetic Word in Jeremiah*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 89–93.

⁸⁷ O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 65.

people, etc.), we suggest that where a single speaker can be identified by text-grammatical and text-contextual factors, and where the text suggests a single space-time situation, that we, instead, keep the inconsistencies and locate them within the single speaker. Once such a decision is made, the single speaker, himself, becomes inconsistent. This results in the question of whether the presence of inconsistent speaking can be explained through psychological frameworks. In our case, we have dealt with apparently contradictory texts in which we argue for YHWH as the single speaker. Consequently, YHWH's speaking is psychologically analyzed in the final section of this article.

Psychological tools of interpretation must be utilized, since historical factors can no longer deliver explanations for textual incoherence. This, of course, applies only to those texts where textual analysis can argue for a single speaker, speaking within a single time-space situation. The application of psychological analytical tools could be considered to be just another text-external means for textual interpretation. However, there is a crucial difference between using analytical *tools* and using speculatively imported, text-external *historical facts*. We don't seek to import text-external and hypothetical facts (about potential speakers, potential historical situations, etc.), but to instead apply analytical tools for text-internal, assumed facts. Again, these text-internal assumptions need to be well argued for through text-linguistic and contextual analysis. That said, we do not say that hypotheses about text-external historical facts are always dangerous or never necessary for any interpretative endeavor. This would be far from true and a nonsensical claim. However, the scholar needs to be careful about where such import of hypothetical historical facts might actually break the actual consistency and communicative intention of a text. The clear distinction between interpretative *tools* and interpretative *materials* (text-internal claims about speakers/participants, times, locations and/or text-external hypothetical claims about speakers/participants, times, locations) is paramount.

*Psychological Perspectives: Emotional Conflict and Complexity,
Yet Mental and Relational Coherency?*

"Who is wise enough to understand this?" (9:12) In psychotherapy, the key to understanding is listening in-depth, liberated from preconceived notions of the presenting patient and problem. Often what is presented may initially be quite confusing, contradictory, difficult to make sense of, and even overwhelming. With time though, after listening intently and getting to know the person speaking, patterns may become evident which help us untangle the complex reality, and understanding may emerge.

In Jeremiah, we are not just dealing with the voice of one patient. Rather, we are apparently dealing with the voices of at least three speakers: the people, Jeremiah, and YHWH. To further complicate things, it is not even clear who is speaking where. As we have seen, there is no scholarly consensus on who is

speaking at which point of the text. Even more, we are listening to highly impassioned speakers. So, our question is not only who is saying which things, but who is feeling what? And, how do we understand not only what is being said, but what is being felt?

As we have said, the texts have apparent incoherencies that interpreters have tried to explain and make cohere in various ways. Apart from Stulman and O'Connor, most scholars have attributed the apparent incoherencies to anything but YHWH. Yet, what happens if the apparent incoherencies *are* allocated to YHWH? Is it possible that the God heard speaking is a God in inner conflict, torn between conflicting emotions and desires, and that this is what the text seeks to communicate? Is it possible that YHWH is in inner conflict, and that this inner conflict is expressed by way of him making conflicting declarations, apparently contradicting himself? Does YHWH, by that standard, become "unhinged"? Is he an incoherent and emotionally unstable speaker who does not make any sense? Or, is it possible to understand YHWH as an impassioned speaker in internal conflict and great emotional distress as he relates to the people, yet mentally and relationally sound and coherent? Beyond that, what concept and image of YHWH is actually presented in Jeremiah, and to what extent does that image challenge the reader's image and concept of YHWH?

Considering the context of Jeremiah where YHWH as a speaker is struggling with the unfaithful people, does it make sense to expect "oneness of feeling" (Carroll) and "unity of emotion" (Holladay)? In real life, positive and negative emotions, though apparently contradictory, are not mutually exclusive categories. Rather, emotional experiences may be "mixed," as evidenced in popular language when we talk about having "mixed feelings" about something and affirmed by theories and research on emotions.⁸⁸ If we envision

⁸⁸ Raul Berrios, Peter Totterdell, and Stephen Kellett, "Eliciting Mixed Emotions: A Meta-Analysis Comparing Models, Types, and Measures," *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2015), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4397957/>. Berrios et al. describe mixed emotions as "a multifaceted emotional experience, which involves the simultaneous experience of different combinations of opposing emotions." It is common to think of emotions as having positive or negative valence, often paired as opposites and mutually exclusive, such as happy-sad. Or, as in the case of more complex emotional experiences; love-hate, safety-fear, hope-despair, etc. We readily understand that more complex emotional experiences, such as love, can be a blend of positive emotions. Various positive emotions come together to create a more-or-less unified emotional experience. But we may struggle in understanding that, for example, love also may incorporate negative as well as positive emotions. Still, as in the case of feeling "in love," anyone who has had such an experience may recognize that, aside from the exhilarating positive emotions, there may also exist negative emotions such as fear, jealousy, worry, and sadness that go with it. Our language, though, has few, if any words, for describing states of emotion where emotions of positive and negative valence are mixed or blended; states where emotions of opposite valence may

the relation between YHWH and Judah as a real-life intimate relationship, it makes more sense from a psychological perspective to expect a highly complex emotional experience. The more distant a relationship, the easier it is to maintain emotional “unity” or “oneness” of positive or negative valence towards the other. At a distance, one does not deal with the fullness of the other, rather one deals with perceived aspects of the other. Perceived aspects may be accurate reflections of reality, but at a distance there is also a high chance of misperception, thus risking that one ends up dealing more with one’s own projection on the other, rather than their true reality. However, the closer, the more intimate a relationship becomes, the more one sees (and hopefully acknowledges) the complexity of the other. With that, the emotional experience of the other becomes more complex, encompassing both positive and negative emotions.

The emotional experience in close relationships is multifaceted and at times internally contradictory, especially in times of relational conflict. When lovers quarrel, one can impassionedly say to the other “I hate you!” only to retract moments later with “I didn’t mean it!” and then to move on to a passionate experience of love. “I hate you!” expresses a certain negative emotion that is dominant in that moment, yet it is not the whole truth about the emotions in the relationship. Rather, the passion of the “I hate you!” may actually be drawing its strength from the contrasting, and apparently contradictory “I love you!” Without the foundational “I love you!”-reality, the “I hate you!” would be a less potent threat. The “I hate you!” does not negate the “I love you!”, rather it may paradoxically affirm it. Psychologically, they can coexist. As Elie Wiesel said, “The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.”⁸⁹ “I love you!” and “I hate you!” are apparently contradictory statements, apparently incoherent, yet they may belong together as expressions of a complex emotional experience. In intimate real-life relationships, rather than expecting “unity” or “oneness” of emotion, we should expect inner conflict and complexity of emotion, especially when the relationship is strained and conflicted.

Therefore, if we allocate the apparently incoherent and contradictory statements and sentiments to one speaker, rather than multiple speakers, what might the purpose of this discourse be? Apart from the potential effects of

be co-activated and co-exist. In our language, and thus in our thinking, the closest we come is saying that we have “mixed feelings” or that we are “ambivalent.” Still, not having words for such emotional states or experiences makes it difficult to verbalize and express them without alternately focusing on one or the other, positive or negative. Thus, with the limitations inherent in our language and thinking, a discourse on being in a state of mixed emotions may appear, itself, to be incoherent and inconsistent. Still, it is not the experience itself that is incoherent and inconsistent, rather it is our limited ability to express the complexity of it that can make it confusing.

⁸⁹ Eliezer Wiesel, *US News & World Report* (27 October 1986).

intermittent appeals and the threats it might have on the listener, what benefit might God, as the speaker, reap from the elaborate expressions of diverse emotion towards His people? If the speaker were to come to the psychotherapist with such strong emotions, the psychotherapist would listen and encourage the speaker to put whatever is felt into words without censure. According to Jonathan Shedler, "Psychodynamic therapy encourages exploration and discussion of the full range of a patient's emotions. The therapist helps the patient describe and put words to feelings, including contradictory feelings, feelings that are troubling or threatening, and feelings that the patient may not initially be able to recognize or acknowledge."⁹⁰

The purpose, benefit, and outcome of such an exploration and discussion may be increased affect consciousness, through which a higher level of affect integration may be achieved. According to Ole André Solbakken et al.:

Affect Consciousness (AC) is defined as the individual's capacity to consciously perceive, tolerate, reflect on, and express the experiences of basic affective activation. Affect integration, a concept referring to the functional and fluent integration of affect, cognition, and behavior, is assumed to be an important aspect of psychological health. The integration of affect, characterized by the capacity for utilizing one's affects for adaptive purposes . . . is assumed to protect against the development of psychopathology by ensuring appropriate responses.⁹¹

It seems to us that in the present texts, YHWH displays a high level of affect consciousness as he experiences and expresses diverse, intense, and contradictory feelings toward the people. As YHWH is expressing his strong emotion towards the people or the prophet, it would be reasonable to think that he is also reflecting, processing, and balancing said emotion, as well as integrating these feelings with his thinking about the people's future and his future actions toward them. Therefore, it should be no surprise that he might say something out loud, yet do something different. Having violent fantasies does not mean that he will act them out. When strong emotions are activated, a range of fantasies and impulses may be activated and, the more one speaks about them, the less likely one may be to act them out.

As YHWH's anger, disgust, and jealousy surge, he still remembers his love, compassion, and longing for the people. He is angry, yet their pain also pains him. It may be seen as a sign of sophisticated psychological ability and capacity that he can accommodate, tolerate, and put all these strong, complex, and contradictory feelings into words, expressing them to a listener. The more they are verbalized, expressed, and processed, the more the inclina-

⁹⁰ Jonathan Shedler, "The Efficacy of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy," *American Psychologist* 65.2 (2010): 98–109.

⁹¹ Ole André Solbakken et al., "Assessment of Affect Integration: Validation of the Affect Consciousness Construct," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 93.3 (2011): 257–265.

tion and desire to act them out may be dissipated. Speaking about it, rather than acting on it, is a key strategy for managing anger and violent impulses. Speaking the emotions to a listener becomes therapeutic. Rather than seeing YHWH as “unhinged” (O’Connor), he may be seen as a model for how to speak transparently and therapeutically in the context of grave relational conflict. And, as long as there is someone speaking and someone listening, there is hope. It’s when indifference sets in that communication dies, and with it, love and hate.

That the post-exilic community continued to transmit these speeches of YHWH indicates that they found value in them, and that they contributed to their understanding of YHWH and his relationship to them. Though the speeches have been perceived to be incoherent, an alternate reading and understanding might acknowledge that they reflect the troubled relationship between YHWH and his people. Though YHWH is not human, and we should be careful not to completely anthropomorphize him, it could be considered that such a relationship where YHWH still deeply and passionately cares, is bound to entail complexity of both positive and negative emotions. And that, though apparently contradictory, these emotions may be relationally coherent as long as they are not acted out destructively. Rather than being seen as incoherent and contradictory, these speeches may be seen as expressions of the deep passion and care of YHWH for his people.

APPENDIX

Text-grammatical Observations of Jeremiah 7

With Jeremiah 7:1, a major section within the book is opened. For the first time, the introduction of YHWH's word, as happening "to Jeremiah" (הַיְיָבֵר אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ), is heard. This speech introduction contains always references to space and/or time (e.g.: 11:1-2, 14:1, 18:1-2, 21:1, 27:1, etc.). While many previous oracles cannot be located regarding time, place and addresses, these ones can. The shift from general oracles (Jer 2-6) whose origin cannot be traced well towards oracles with geo-historical characteristics goes parallel with the shift from poetic speech (most of Jer 2-6) to prosaic speech (from Jer 7 on). The anchoring in space and/or time helps the reader to imagine the previous poetic oracles in their potential time-space context.

Jer 7:1-8:17 forms one literary unit that is held together by YHWH's explicit speaking to Jrm (cf. vv1-2, 16, 27).⁹² However, within this larger speech other speeches are integrated (see table below). YHWH calls Jrm to speak as the divine representative to the people. These people-directed and divinely authored speeches are integrated in the larger YHWH-Jrm speech (see Table 1).

These speech embeddings are a challenge to any reading attempt. This is particularly because the 2P references can either refer to the people (embedded speech level) or to Jrm (highest speech level). With Jer 8:18 the speech situation changes. Any 2P address is absent and the divine "I" becomes central. The dialogical character of Jer 7:1-8:17, therefore, changes into a divine soliloquy that invites the reader to access the innermost world of thought and feeling of the creator God himself.

Here, the imperatives (taking impv., neg + juss., and *wegatal* forms, in 7:2, 16, 27) clarify that chapter 7 contains a command to be carried out. On the basis of the text-grammatical structure, we suggest that the so-called Temple Sermon consists of four parts (7:3-15; 7:21-26; 7:28; and 8:4-13) and is interrupted by voices that appear from outside of the sermon setting. The following table depicts this structure:

⁹² Duhm goes even so far as to claim that Jer 7-10 are edited in such a way that these chapters were intended to form one single sermon (see Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* [Tübingen, Leipzig: Mohr Siebeck, 1901], 74).

Table 1. Literary Structure and Speech Situations

Verses	Structural Elements	Speech Situation
7:1–3a	Introduction	YHWH => Jeremiah
7:3b–15	Sermon part A: the rhetoric of desperation	YHWH => Jeremiah => people
7:16–20	=> Outside-the-Sermon Voices	YHWH => Jeremiah
7:21–26	Sermon part B: from sermon to sarcasm to solitude	YHWH => Jeremiah => people
7:27	=> Outside-the-Sermon Voices	YHWH => Jeremiah
7:28	Sermon part C: This is the people!	YHWH => Jeremiah => people
7:29–8:3	=> YHWH's soliloquy: Divine Distancing	YHWH
8:4–13	Sermon part D: about loving lies and the corruption of education	YHWH => Jeremiah => people
8:14–17	=> Outside-the-Sermon Voices	People, YHWH, “a messenger”

The crucial verse for our purpose is 7:13. The clause opens with *וַעֲתָה*. The *ו*-conjunction connects verse 13 smoothly to the previous verses and the *עֲתָה* initiates the formulation of a conclusion. It is made clear that the conclusion of judgment is based upon the previous verses by noting the causal reasoning triggered by *יֵעַן עֲשׂוֹתְכֶם* (“because of your deeds”). Within the YHWH speech no deictic markers are used to signify a time gap between verses 3b–12 and 13–15. In addition, no differentiation between the nation's generations are made as the 2nd pl. m. refers consistently to the present generation.

A computer-assisted, text-grammatical analysis considers the Temple Sermon to be a grammatically coherent textual unit. The graph below is the output by the syn04types program of the ETCBC research environment:

[<Bu>] הדבר	[<Re>] אשר	[<Pe>] יהיה	[<Co>] אל ירמיהו	[<Aj>] מאת יהוה	NmC1 << [R] JER 07,01
					xq00 [attrib.] JER 07,01
[<Pe>] לאמר					InfC [adjunct] JER 07,01
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ועמד	[<Co>] וירמיהו	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		zIm0 << [Q] JER 07,02
					xq00 << zIm0 JER 07,02
[<Co>] וירמיהו	[<Pe>] וירמיהו	[<Co>] וירמיהו	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq00 << Wq00 JER 07,02
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		zIm0 << [Q] JER 07,02
					Voet << zIm0 JER 07,02
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		Ptop [attrib.] JER 07,02
					InfC [adjunct] JER 07,02
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X << zIm0 JER 07,03
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		zIm0 << [Q] JER 07,03
					Wq00 << zIm0 JER 07,03
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X << zIm0 JER 07,04
					InfC [adjunct] JER 07,04
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		NmC1 << [Q] JER 07,04
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X << zIm0 JER 07,05
					xq00 << xq00 JER 07,05
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X << xq00 JER 07,06
					Wq00 << xq00 JER 07,06
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X << xq00 JER 07,07
					xq00 [attrib.] JER 07,07
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		Ptop << zIm0 JER 07,08
					InfC [adjunct] JER 07,08
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		InfA << Ptop JER 07,09
					InfA [coord] JER 07,09
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		InfA [coord] JER 07,09
					Wq00 << Ptop JER 07,10
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq00 << Wq00 JER 07,10
					xq0X [attrib.] JER 07,10
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq00 << Wq00 JER 07,10
					zq00 << [Q] JER 07,10
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		InfC [adjunct] JER 07,10
					xq0X << Wq00 JER 07,11
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X [attrib.] JER 07,11
					DefC << xq0X JER 07,11
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		CFwn << Ptop JER 07,11
					xq00 [resumpt] JER 07,11
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		M5yn << xq00 JER 07,11
					xIm0 << CFwn JER 07,12
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		NmC1 [attrib.] JER 07,12
					xq00 [attrib.] JER 07,12
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		WIm0 << xIm0 JER 07,12
					xq00 [object] JER 07,12
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		M5yn << Ptop JER 07,13
					InfC [adjunct] JER 07,13
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		M5yn << InfC JER 07,13
					Way0 [coord] JER 07,13
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		InfA << Way0 JER 07,13
					InfA [adjunct] JER 07,13
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		Wq00 << Way0 JER 07,13
					Way0 << Way0 JER 07,13
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		Wq00 << Way0 JER 07,13
					Wq00 << InfC JER 07,14
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq0X [attrib.] JER 07,14
					Ptop [attrib.] JER 07,14
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		DefC << Wq00 JER 07,14
					xq00 [attrib.] JER 07,14
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq00 [adjunct] JER 07,14
					xq00 << Wq00 JER 07,15
[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Pe>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Co>] ובשער בית יהוה	[<Lo>] את הדבר הזה		xq00 [adjunct] JER 07,15

Figure 1. Output by the syn04types program of the ETCBC research environment for Jeremiah 7:1–15.

Text-Grammatical Observations of Jeremiah 8:18–9:10

The object of mourning is the “daughter of my people” (בִּתְעֻמִּי). Throughout the Old Testament, this phrase achieves the highest concentration in these fifteen verses. It appears five times in 8:19, 21, 22, 23; 9:6.⁹³ The one mourning is in greatest depression, allowing no thought other than grief over the “daughter of my people” to take precedence. The question that commentators struggle with is the identity of the one mourning. There are two reasons for this confusion. First, the first-person speaker is not always identified. In Jer 8:19b (compare מְדוֹנֵה הַכְּעָסוֹנִי with לְמַעַן הַכְּעָסוֹנִי in 7:18), 9:2, 5, 6, 8, and 10, the speaker can explicitly be identified as YHWH. For the remaining verses explicit speaker-identification is absent. Second, identifying all the first-person speakers with YHWH seems unlikely because of the varying attitudes toward the “daughter of my people” expressed by the various speakers throughout 8:18–9:10. The table below illustrates the problem and shows the shifting of attitudes:

Table 2. Attitudes and Speakers

Verses	Attitude towards the People	Speaker
8:18–19a	sympathy for the suffering people	?
8:19b	accusation of the people	YHWH
8:21–23	sympathy for the suffering people	?
9:1–8	accusation of the people	YHWH
9:9–10	sympathy for the suffering people	YHWH

If one follows the general scholarly suggestion, in which one entity/person authors sympathy and YHWH authors accusation, two different entities actually claim the “ownership” of the people, since both YHWH (9:6), and the under-defined first-person speaker (who shows sympathy in 8:18) both refer to Judah as “the daughter of my people”. The linguistic structure, however, challenges this perspective. Jeremiah 8:18–9:10 presents itself as a text-grammatical unit due to the dominant presence of 1st sg. c. references. Whenever the text identifies the speaker explicitly, it always identifies YHWH and no one else. This grammatical coherence is only disturbed by the apparent psychological incoherence of the text (accusation vs. sympathy). If the grammatical indications were to dominate the identification of the speakers, YHWH would consequentially be the sole speaker of 8:18–9:10. If this is the case, the reader/listener encounters a YHWH with conflicting emotions. On the one hand, he is empathetic with the suffering people while, on the other hand, he

⁹³ Once in Isaiah, once in Ezekiel, five times in Lamentations, eight times in Jeremiah.

is deeply angry with their immorality.

A textual comparison between the sections that have an under-defined first-person speaker, and other materials in Jeremiah, seems to also substantiate the assumption of YHWH as sole speaker, revealing two sides of his troubled self:

First, “daughter of my people” is used elsewhere by YHWH as the explicit speaker (see 4:11⁹⁴; 9:6; 14:17). In evaluating all cases that appear outside of chapter 8 (4:11⁹⁵; 6:26; 9:6; 14:17), the phrase is never used as part of the speech of the prophet or the people. It follows, then, that “daughter of my people” is part of YHWH’s speech in all its appearances in chapter 8 (vv. 11, 19, 21–23).⁹⁶

Second, “day and night” is elsewhere used in YHWH’s speeches: 14:17; 16:13; 33:20; 33:25; 36:30.⁹⁷

Third, a comparison between 8:18–19b and 4:19–22⁹⁸ shows similar language usage (e.g., “my heart”/לִבִּי) and the same intensity of mourning language:

Table 3. Jeremiah 8:18–19 and 4:19–22

Jeremiah 8:18–19 (Glanz)	Jeremiah 4:19–22 (NRSV)
¹⁸ My joy is gone; grief is upon me; my heart (לִבִּי) is sick.	¹⁹ My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart (לִבִּי)! My heart (לִבִּי) is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent; for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. ²⁰ Disaster overtakes disaster, the whole land is laid waste. Suddenly my tents are destroyed, my curtains in a moment.

⁹⁴ See footnote 99.

⁹⁵ See footnote 99.

⁹⁶ If one assumes the same author/redactor(s) for the book of Jeremiah and Lamentation, further support is gained for identifying Jeremiah with the sympathizing speeches. This is because Lamentation uses the phrase “daughter of my people” five times while never presenting YHWH as the speaker of this phrase (Lam 2:11; 3:48; 4:3, 6, 10). However, since both Jeremiah and Lamentations’ phrase consistency is often different, it becomes methodologically problematic if one assumes the same literary dynamics for both books. We, therefore, suggest accumulating book-internal arguments for the purpose of speaker identification.

⁹⁷ See <https://shebanq.ancient-data.org/hebrew/query?version=2017&id=3333>.

⁹⁸ YHWH is clearly speaker of 4:22. See also footnote 99.

¹⁹ Behold, the cry for help of the daughter of my people from a distant land: “Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her?”

Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?

²¹ How long must I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

²² “For my people are foolish, they do not know me; they are stupid children, they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but do not know how to do good.”

In 4:19, YHWH is intensely empathizing with the people’s wartorn condition.⁹⁹ Jeremiah 4:22 suddenly shifts into accusing them of apostasy and immorality. The same type of shift is visible in 8:18 and 19b.

Fourth, a comparison between 8:23 and 14:17 demonstrates identical vocabulary (“day and night,” “tears,” and “daughter of my people”), but, in verse 17, YHWH is clearly the author of the expressed sympathies towards his suffering people.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ While we are aware of the challenges of speaker identification, we would suggest YHWH as the speaker of 4:19–22 based on the following line of argumentation: First, YHWH is explicitly identified as speaker in verse 17 (נְאֻם־יְהוָה). Second, YHWH’s specific language is used in verse 22 (עָמִי, and אֲדַעֵךְ [see 2:8]). Third, between verses 17 and 22 the first-person references continue without interruption, indicating—text-grammatically—that verses 17–22 are a cohesive speech. Fourth, besides YHWH, no other first-person participant is explicitly mentioned. Fifth, a challenge to a consistent YHWH-first-person identification appears in the expression “My anguish, my anguish” (מַעֵי מַעֵי, v. 19a) and “my tents” (אֶהְלִי, v. 20). However, in Jeremiah, a highly-emotional YHWH who can cry is not unknown (see 9:9; 14:17). Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel depict a YHWH who is moving and changing his address. He leaves the temple to reside with the exiles and seeks to travel through the desert (see 9:1 [BHS]). The “tent” metaphor could, therefore, refer to YHWH’s dwelling place, the tabernacle of the Exodus (cf. 10:18–20; see also Fischer in *Jeremia 1–25*, 392). Alternatively, Fischer suggests that the tents refer to the homes of “Lady Jerusalem” (*Jeremia 1–25*, 222).

¹⁰⁰ The actual speech of 14:17 is introduced with וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם (“you shall say to them”). This speech introduction is used many times in Jeremiah. Almost all speeches that follow these introductions have in common that their first-person references refer explicitly to YHWH (see 3:12; 5:19; 13:13; 16:11; 19:3, 11; 23:33; 25:27; 26:4; 34:2; 35:13; 43:10).

Table 4. Jeremiah 8:23 and 14:17

Jeremiah 8:23 [BHS] (Glanz)	Jeremiah 14:17 (Glanz)
Who turns my head into waters, and my eye into a tear-fountain (דִּמְעָה), that I might weep day and night (יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה) for the slain of the daughter of my people (בֵּית־עַמִּי)!	You shall say to them this word: ‘My eyes run down with tears (דִּמְעָה) night and day (יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה), and not let them cease, for the virgin daughter of my people (בֵּית־ עַמִּי) is shattered with a great wound, with a very grievous blow.

These observations lead to the suggestion that all first-person forms found in 8:18–9:10 are to be identified with YHWH. Thus, we suggest that this textual unit is crafted in such a way as to provide a window into the emotional struggles of YHWH, himself, who appears to be both sympathizing with the judged as well as with the seeker of justice. God can utterly weep while still carrying out just judgment.

A computer assisted text-grammatical analysis considers the 8:23–9:10 to be a grammatically coherent textual unit. The graph below is the output by the syn04types program of the ETCBC research environment:

[<Ob><ap>]	[נחשים / צפענים]	[<Co>]	[משלח]	[<PC>]	[בכם]	[הנני]	[<Ta>]	[<Cj>]	Ptop	<< ZIm0	JER	08,17
[<Su>]	[לחש]	[<PC>]	[להם]	[<NC>]	[ואין]	[אשר]	[<Re>]	[<Cj>]	NmCl	[attrib.]	JER	08,17
[<Ob>]	[ואתכם]	[<PC>]	[נשכו]	[<Pe>]	[<Cj>]	[ו]	[<Cj>]	Wqt0	<< Ptop	JER	08,17	
[<PC>]	[נאם יהוה]	[<PC>]	[נאם יהוה]	[<PC>]	[נאם יהוה]	[<PC>]	[נאם יהוה]	MSyn	<< Wqt0	JER	08,17	
[<PC>]	[מבליגיתי]	[<PC>]	[עלי יגון]	[<PC>]	[עלי יגון]	[<PC>]	[עלי יגון]	NmCl	<< Ptop	JER	08,18	
[<PC>]	[מבליגיתי]	[<PC>]	[עלי יגון]	[<PC>]	[עלי יגון]	[<PC>]	[עלי יגון]	AjCl	<< NmCl	JER	08,18	
[<PC>]	[הנה]	[<Cj>]	[וקול שיעת בת עמי]	[<Su>]	[מארץ מרחקים]	[<PC>]	[הנה]	NmCl	<< NmCl	JER	08,19	
[<PC>]	[הנה]	[<Cj>]	[וקול שיעת בת עמי]	[<Su>]	[מארץ מרחקים]	[<PC>]	[הנה]	NmCl	<< [Q]	JER	08,19	
[<PC>]	[ואם]	[<Cj>]	[מלכה]	[<Su>]	[ואין]	[<NC>]	[בה]	NmCl	<< NmCl	JER	08,19	
[<PC>]	[מדוע]	[<Cj>]	[הכעסוני]	[<PC>]	[בפסליהם / בהבלי נכר]	[<PC>]	[מדוע]	Xqt0	<< NmCl	JER	08,19	
[<PC>]	[ועבר]	[<PC>]	[קציר]	[<Ob>]	[ועבר]	[<PC>]	[קציר]	Zqt0	<< [Q]	JER	08,20	
[<PC>]	[כלה]	[<PC>]	[קין]	[<Su>]	[כלה]	[<PC>]	[קין]	ZqtX	<< Zqt0	JER	08,20	
[<PC>]	[אנחנו]	[<Cj>]	[לוא]	[<Ng>]	[גושענו]	[<PC>]	[אנחנו]	WXqt	<< ZqtX	JER	08,20	
[<PC>]	[ועל שבר בת עמי]	[<Aj>]	[השברתי]	[<PC>]	[ועל שבר בת עמי]	[<PC>]	[ועל שבר בת עמי]	Xqt0	<< NmCl	JER	08,21	
[<PC>]	[קדרתי]	[<PC>]	[קדרתי]	[<PC>]	[קדרתי]	[<PC>]	[קדרתי]	Zqt0	<< Xqt0	JER	08,21	
[<PC>]	[ושמה]	[<Su>]	[החזקתני]	[<PC>]	[ושמה]	[<Su>]	[החזקתני]	Xqt1	<< Zqt0	JER	08,21	
[<PC>]	[וצרי]	[<Su>]	[ואין]	[<NC>]	[בגלעני]	[<PC>]	[וצרי]	NmCl	<< Xqt0	JER	08,22	
[<PC>]	[ואם]	[<Cj>]	[רפא]	[<Su>]	[ואין]	[<NC>]	[שם]	NmCl	<< NmCl	JER	08,22	
[<PC>]	[וכי]	[<Cj>]	[מדוע]	[<Ng>]	[עלתה]	[<PC>]	[ארכת בת עמי]	XqtX	<< Xqt0	JER	08,22	
[<PC>]	[ומי]	[<Su>]	[יתן]	[<PC>]	[ראשי]	[<Ob>]	[ומי]	Xyqt	<< NmCl	JER	08,23	
[<PC>]	[ומי]	[<Cj>]	[ועני]	[<Ob>]	[ומי]	[<PC>]	[ומי]	Ellp	<< Xyqt	JER	08,23	
[<PC>]	[ואבכה]	[<PC>]	[יומים / ו / לילה]	[<Cj>]	[את חללי בת עמי]	[<PC>]	[ואבכה]	WYq0	<< Xyqt	JER	08,23	
[<PC>]	[ומי]	[<Su>]	[יתנני]	[<PC>]	[במזכר]	[<Co>]	[מלון ארוים]	Xyqt	<< [R]	JER	09,01	
[<PC>]	[ואעזבה]	[<PC>]	[את עמי]	[<PC>]	[ואעזבה]	[<PC>]	[את עמי]	WYq0	<< Xyqt	JER	09,01	
[<PC>]	[ואלכה]	[<PC>]	[מאתם]	[<Co>]	[ואלכה]	[<PC>]	[מאתם]	WYq0	<< WYq0	JER	09,01	
[<PC>]	[כי]	[<Cj>]	[כלם]	[<Su>]	[מנאפים]	[<PC>]	[כי]	Ptop	<< Xyqt	JER	09,01	
[<PC>]	[ועצרת בגדים]	[<PC>]	[ועצרת בגדים]	[<PC>]	[ועצרת בגדים]	[<PC>]	[ועצרת בגדים]	NmCl	[coordin]	JER	09,01	
[<Ob>]	[ואת לשונם]	[<PC>]	[ידרכו]	[<Cj>]	[ואת לשונם]	[<PC>]	[ידרכו]	Way0	<< Ptop	JER	09,02	
[<PC>]	[וקשתם]	[<Su>]	[שקר]	[<PC>]	[וקשתם]	[<Su>]	[שקר]	NmCl	<< Ptop	JER	09,02	
[<PC>]	[ולא]	[<Ng>]	[לאמונה]	[<Co>]	[גברו]	[<PC>]	[בארץ]	WxQ0	<< NmCl	JER	09,02	
[<PC>]	[וכי]	[<Cj>]	[מרעה / אל רעה]	[<Co>]	[יצאו]	[<PC>]	[וכי]	Xqt0	<< NmCl	JER	09,02	
[<PC>]	[ואתי]	[<Ob>]	[לא]	[<Ng>]	[ידעו]	[<PC>]	[ואתי]	WxQ0	<< Xqt0	JER	09,02	
[<PC>]	[ונאם יהוה]	[<PC>]	[ונאם יהוה]	[<PC>]	[ונאם יהוה]	[<PC>]	[ונאם יהוה]	MSyn	<< WxQ0	JER	09,02	
[<PC>]	[ואיש]	[<Aj>]	[ומרעהו]	[<Co>]	[השמרו]	[<PC>]	[ואיש]	xIm0	<< Xyqt	JER	09,03	
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[<PC>]	[וכי]	[<Cj>]	[אל אה]	[<Su>]	[יעקב]	[<PC>]	[וכי]	Xyqt	<< xIm0	JER	09,03	
[<PC>]	[וכל רע]	[<Aj>]	[ורכיל]	[<Aj>]	[יהלך]	[<PC>]	[וכל רע]	WxY0	<< Xyqt	JER	09,03	
[<PC>]	[ואיש]	[<Aj>]	[ברעהו]	[<Co>]	[יהתלו]	[<PC>]	[ואיש]	WxY0	<< xIm0	JER	09,04	
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[<PC>]	[במרימה]	[<Aj>]	[מאנו]	[<PC>]	[במרימה]	[<Aj>]	[מאנו]	Xqt0	<< NmCl	JER	09,05	
[<PC>]	[ידעת]	[<PC>]	[אוחי]	[<Ob>]	[ידעת]	[<PC>]	[אוחי]	InfC	[object]	JER	09,05	
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[<PC>]	[ולכן]	[<Mo>]	[ולכן]	[<PC>]	[ולכן]	[<Mo>]	[ולכן]	MSyn	<< xIm0	JER	09,06	
[<PC>]	[וכה]	[<Mo>]	[ואמר]	[<PC>]	[יהוה צבאות]	[<Su>]	[וכה]	XqtX	<< MSyn	JER	09,06	
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[<PC>]	[ומרימה]	[<Ob>]	[ודבר]	[<PC>]	[ומרימה]	[<Ob>]	[ודבר]	NmCl	<< Xyqt0	JER	09,07	
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[<PC>]	[ועל ההרים]	[<Co>]	[ואשא]	[<PC>]	[ובכי ונהי]	[<Ob>]	[ועל ההרים]	Xyqt0	<< Ptop	JER	09,09	
[<PC>]	[ועל נאות מדבר]	[<Cj>]	[קניה]	[<Ob>]	[ועל נאות מדבר]	[<Cj>]	[קניה]	Ellp	<< Xyqt0	JER	09,09	
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[<Co><ap>]	[וגתלי]	[<PC>]	[את ירושלם]	[<Ob>]	[וגתלי]	[<PC>]	[את ירושלם]	Wqt0	<< Xyqt0	JER	09,10	
[<Aj>]	[ואת ערי יהודה]	[<Ob>]	[ואתן]	[<PC>]	[ושממה]	[<Ob>]	[ואת ערי יהודה]	WxY0	<< Wqt0	JER	09,10	

Figure 2. Output by the syn04types program of the ETCBC research environment for Jeremiah 8:17–9:10.

