

A “Polyphonic Hero” David as the “Unfinalizable Other”: Rereading the Story of David outside of a Structured System of Language in the Books of Samuel

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I. Introduction

Acknowledging the complexity of David in the Deuteronomistic History (DH) has become common place in literary and historical studies alike. In an attempt to overcome the tensions existing in contemporary scholarship on DH among the competing methodologies, this paper illustrates the usefulness of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of dialogue in exploring the complexity of the figure of David. Rather than attempting to chart “the history” of the Deuteronomistic History, and instead of simply separating language from the exigencies of history, this paper revisualizes the interrelations of space, time, social context, characters and readers in the DH through the process of “dialogization.”

According to the “multi-linguagedness” of 1 and 2 Samuel, David is a shepherd in the field and a musician at the royal court; a little boy and a grown-up warrior; a young man who fights to defend Yhwh’s honor and fights to promote himself and his ambitions; the anointed of Yhwh and “a man of blood”; the man after Yhwh’s own heart and the man who speaks to his own heart; a quasi-Philistine refugee in exile and an Israelite king in return; the savior (savior) of his people and the killer of some of them, including his soldier Uriah (and his son Absalom?); the sinner and the innocent; the virile and the impotent; the crowned and the decrowned; the praised and the ridiculed, etc. In the present paper, I ask who is David from a Bakhtinian perspective, outside of a structured system of language in DH.

In order to perceive David as other than, more than, an unchanging and static character, one must begin to conceive of the utterance of the Samuel prose from a different angle, which can be accomplished through a resort to the Bakhtinian definition of utterance. Understanding an utterance as dialogical allows David to be seen as free and independent of the linguistic system of signifying structures that limits and controls the freedom and capacity of a character in Samuel and in DH. Gunn’s important question—who is David¹—help one to read the prose of David outside of the box of static and “ideal” images and forms. His insights may challenge our security in the idea of David as a “stable” and “normative” character that is merely subject to the narrative system: “Just when we have David, he is plucked away. As we grasp the essence, the paradigm, the ideal king, the just king, the covenant king, we grasp instead a man of blood, man of chaos, man of the sword, man of mighty men.”² Gunn argues that the story of David “refuses to be tamed, secured, or neatly ordered.”³

In this paper, the main question is not *what* the Samuel prose as a singular utterance from the speaker’s perspective may have addressed to the audience (about who is David); rather, it is *how* the utterance of Samuel prose can be continuously shaped and reshaped beyond the static

1. Gunn asks the questions—who is David and where is David—in “In Security: The David of Biblical Narrative,” in *Signs and Wonders: Biblical Texts in Literary Focus*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 133ff.

2. *Ibid.*, 135.

3. *Ibid.*, 137.

and stable image of David, on the part of the audience. While in continuity with the perspective of some recent literary critics (especially, narrative critics) that the audience must play an active role when rereading the prose (of DH), I extend the argument further. I contend that when the speaker is determining the content and style of an utterance, he/she already expects the audience's active and responsive understanding. From the very beginning, an utterance is determined by the speaker while taking into account possible reactions of the audience.

This paper provides an example of how the prose dealing with David can be reassessed on the part of the reader/listener, and attempts to show significant changes in biblical scholarship on the books of Samuel (and DH), moving from the typically posed questions regarding the author or authorship to the issues and concerns of the ancient and/or contemporary readers. Again, this study does not question what the prose of David might have signified to the audience, on the part of the speaker, but asks what the process of speech communication between the speaker and the audience (in the context of exile and after)⁴ might have exposed beyond the finalization of the destruction and fall.

In this paper, the term utterance is dealt with in relation to how David's prose can be reread in light of an understanding of speech communication as a social phenomenon. In addition, the concept of audience is laid out to explain the role of listeners as active participants, rather than passive recipients, in speech communication. The term utterance, in fact, found its most influential expression in Saussure's model of language as a system of forms (*langue*) and utterance (*parole*). According to Saussure, the utterance (*parole*) cannot be the object of study for linguistic analysis, since it constitutes the event of an "individual speech act."⁵ From Saussure's perspective, the utterance is considered "individual" rather than "social"; "accessory" rather than "essential."⁶

Valentin N. Voloshinov, one of Bakhtin's closest collaborators,⁷ argues that the Saussurean classification of utterance is controlled by certain linguistic factors (such as grammar, phonetics, etc.) that are "identical and normative" for all utterances, even though each individual

4. One can reread the prose account of David as utterances engaging in a verbal exchange of speech communication rather than as an authorial or individual speech act. As a basis for this strategy, this paper presupposes two things in the social stream: one, the socio-political event of the exile, and two, the social interaction between speaker and listener in the event of exile. In terms of the socio-political event of the exile, my paper presupposes the historical situation of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and city and the deportations of the royal descendants to Babylon, all of which drastically affect the people whom I regard as speakers of and listeners to the prose's utterances. The exile presents a life event in which the people likely experienced and suffered the crisis communally as well as (or, perhaps, rather than) individualistically. The utterances in Samuel and DH are understood to be influenced and, in fact, determined by the social stream of the exile. What is at stake here is not a system of linguistics but "real people's actions" in response to this "messiness," that is, to this destruction and exile. The exchange of the utterance is "not systemic, but messy," unfolded by the unexpected events of the exile.

5. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Roy Harris (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1983), 8-15.

6. In Saussure's words, *Course in General Linguistics*, 13-14, "In distinguishing language (*langue*) from utterance (*parole*), we distinguish at the same time: (1) what is social from what is individual, and (2) what is essential from what is ancillary and more or less accidental."

7. Here I am not going to deal with the issue of the "disputed texts" —works published by his associates, Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev. In the United States, due to the influence of Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, Voloshinov's and Medvedev's works have been taken to have been written by Bakhtin himself. However, Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson raise objections to Clark and Holquist's position, and offer their reasons for believing that Bakhtin did not write the texts in question. See Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 147; Morson and Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 101-119.

utterance might be “idiosyncratic and unique.”⁸ For example, when the phrase “David is the king of Israel” (cf. 1 Sam 21:12) is expressed in the form of a Saussurean utterance, as the event of an individual speech act, the “normatively identical” sound of “David the king of Israel” signifies *the* meaning of the word(s) that will be equally grasped by everyone who utters it. In the words of Voloshinov, it is this Saussurean normative identity that “guarantees that the word in question will be understood by all members of the language community.”⁹ Voloshinov claims that, as the Saussurean *parole*, the utterance is considered to “insure the unity” of a given word—in this case, the utterance “David is the king of Israel” means the one and same thing in every individual speech act.

Thinking along with a Saussurean view of utterance, one would have to treat the utterances in Samuel (i.e., utterances as short as a single sentence and as long as the books of Samuel) as though they are contributing to the uniformity of the text in the monologic (individual) act of speaking/writing. If one was dependent upon the Saussurean treatment of the utterance, David’s character in Samuel would be illuminated from the angle of the stable, normative, and extrahistorical forms of language.¹⁰ In this respect, one might call David a “paper person,”¹¹ controlled by a linguistic, synchronic system of the narrative as it exists at a given moment. The character of David might be, therefore, understood as subject to the signifying structures of the narrative of Samuel and DH. He would then be defined as a character that is unchanging, static, and therefore equally graspable “by all the members of a given community.”

This study presupposes that the utterances are neither controlled by their “normatively identical” linguistic forms nor limited by their existence as “individual” and “random” speech acts. Rather, utterances in Samuel and DH are perceived as the social event of dialogic interactions within a continuous communication process.¹² If a hierarchical conception of the communication process presents the speaker in an active role and the listener in a passive, receptive role, then the (Bakhtinian) understanding of dialogic communication anticipates the listener’s active participation in speech communication with the speaker. For Bakhtin, as soon as the audience hears the speaker and understands the meaning of the speaker’s utterance, the audience “simultaneously” takes a responsive attitude toward the speaker. The audience either agrees or disagrees with the speaker in his/her response: the audience can accept, reject, apply, modify, reinterpret, and so on. The main point here is that the diverse and multifaceted responses

8. Voloshinov argues against the Saussurean view of the utterance: “each individual creative act, each utterance, is idiosyncratic and unique, but each utterance contains elements identical with elements in other utterances of the given speech group. And it is precisely these factors—the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical factors that are *identical* and therefore *normative* for all utterances—that insure the unity of a given language and its comprehension by all the members of a given community.” See Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (New York; London: Seminar Press, 1973), 52 (author’s emphasis).

9. *Ibid.*, 53.

10. Voloshinov discusses how Saussure opposes the history of language to language as a synchronic system. He comments that Saussure, in the spirit of the Enlightenment and rationalism, “regards history as an irrational force distorting the logical purity of the language system” (*ibid.*, 61).

11. I borrow the term “paper person” from Mieke Bal, although the expression may have a different and more problematized overtone in Bal’s argument from the point of view of narratology and structuralism. In Bal’s words, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 115–16, “they [characters] are fabricated creatures made up from fantasy, imitation, memory: paper people, without flesh and blood... Character is intuitively the most crucial category of narrative, and also most subject to projection and fallacies.”

12. Cf. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 94.

from the audience are *not* determined by the speaker of the utterance and, therefore, surprise the speaker.

This perspective critically opposes the Saussurean linguistic model, which tries to define the meaning of the speech content primarily from the standpoint of the speaker.¹³ Bakhtin asserts that “unless one accounts for the speaker’s attitude toward the *other* [instead of the speaker’s attitude toward the content of speech]...one can understand neither the genre nor the style of speech.”¹⁴ I contend that when the speaker is determining the content and style of an utterance, he/she already expects the audience’s active and responsive understanding. The audience becomes an active participant in speech communication with the speaker, and thus makes a decision regarding the content and style of his/her utterances *with* the speaker.

In the present study, the role of the audience as the other is crucial for understanding the nature of the utterances in the prose of Samuel. Unless one radically reconceives the audience as the *other* speaker, one cannot entirely refute and exclude the traditional assumption that the listener, after all, plays only a passive role in receiving and comprehending the semantic content of the speaker’s utterance. As soon as one perceives the position or role of the audience to be the other speaker in a continuous process of speech communication, a completely different picture emerges, which allows for a radical reassessment of the nature of the utterances in Samuel and DH.

Since the DH was proposed as the product of an individual Deuteronomistic hand (by Martin Noth), a body of scholarship has emerged that centered on how the Deuteronomist(s) wrote, edited, reconstructed, narrated, or re-presented this corpus, and this line of investigation continues on. Diverse hypotheses and theories have been offered by biblical scholars regarding the purpose and/or intentions of the Deuteronomistic language, sometimes by a resort to a diachronic approach that identifies *the* perspective of individual Deuteronomists and redactions. While some find the overarching purpose of DH to be hopeful, even optimistic, showing the audience the possibility for the continuation of Davidic kingship, other scholars argue the language and ideology of DH give its audience an ultimately negative assessment of Davidic kingship as a failed system of leadership due to the fall of Jerusalem and subsequent exile. Thus, scholarly propositions regarding DH’s negative or positive assessments of the character David and of the Davidic monarchy (in the context of exile) depend upon two prevailing assumptions: 1) that the message of the speaker (author), the Deuteronomist, is *sent* to his contemporaries, the audience (reader), and 2) that there is an active speaker (author) and a passive listener (reader). Simply put, they presume that an authorial message, whether negative or positive, is unilaterally delivered to an audience that must passively receive and understand its contents.

In the present paper, I reconceive the utterance in the prose dealing with David as a “unit of speech communication,” rather than as an individual speech act. The utterance’s “addressivity,” which Bakhtin defines as “the quality of turning to someone,” is key to understanding the function of DH. Once the audience is perceived as an active participant in speech communication, one cannot present the function of the prose as simply being positive or negative toward David and Davidic monarchy with the intention of *enlightening* the audience about the author’s purpose

13. Bakhtin claims, “One cannot say that these diagrams [of the traditional active-passive model] are false or that they do not correspond to certain aspects of reality. But when they are put forth as the actual whole of speech communication, they become a scientific fiction.” Here Bakhtin emphasizes the significance of actual, unexpected responses of the listener upon the speaker. See Bakhtin, “The Problem of Speech Genres,” in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 68.

14. *Ibid.*, 97–98 (author’s emphasis).

in writing/editing the prose. Rather, the utterances of Samuel (and DH) regarding David are freely open to the unexpectedness and indeterminacy of speech communication in the world of (post)exile. Whoever is the given speaker—the Deuteronomistic author, editor, or narrator—he/she is not the first to speak about the utterance, because the speaker’s utterance always remains “a link in the chain of speech communication.” In this respect, the speaker’s utterance may be already a response to the audience who participates in speech communication with the speaker *from the very beginning*. The speaker always *responds* to “others’ utterances that precede it [the speaker’s utterance].”¹⁵ Radically, the speaker becomes the listener; the listener becomes the speaker.

This other speaker, the audience, is imagined, in this paper, as ordinary people who live in the world of (post)exile, where hierarchical dominance and the authority of the monarchy have been lost; they are the uneducated, mostly illiterate, people who have dialogic relationships with the speaker, mainly through verbal communication. In the process of speech communication, the audience as the other speaker of the utterance continuously participates in shaping and determining the utterance *with* the speaker.

The dialogic, verbal communication may have continued, without ceasing, beyond the destruction and fall in the world of (post)exile. It is the role of the audience (as the other speaker) to open speech communication without providing any synthetic, concluding words to the DH. When the Davidic kingship and its ruling class had fallen in the exile and postexile, the audience—as the people without power, class, education, or prestige—may have contributed to shaping the utterance in the immediate future of (post)exile. What is at stake here is for whom, and importantly, by whom the utterance of DH is opened to the concrete, immediate future. The main question is not *what* the DH may have addressed to the audience in the context of exile, on the part of the speaker; rather, it is *how* the word of DH can be continuously shaped and reshaped beyond the fall of the kingship and the exile of the ruling class, on the part of the audience.

In sum, in the present paper, I examine how the character of David can be reimagined when guided by a Bakhtinian understanding of utterance. I presuppose that the utterances of Samuel and DH, as the metalinguistic reality in the prose, are not controlled by a “pure” linguistic system, nor grounded in an individual creative act of speech or individual ideology or “psychology.” Rather, the utterances in the Samuel prose may be understood as intermingled and interrelated through the process of communication between speakers and listeners in a social, messy (i.e., extralinguistic) world of (post)exile. Utterances in the prose of David are reread as phenomena of concrete speech communication among people who never take control over the other and strive for agreement, and who never reach full agreement and full identity. What follows shows examples of how the utterances of the prose dealing with David are ungraspable rather than controllable; changing rather than complete and static; disunified rather than unified.

II. David Becomes a “Polyphonic Hero”

Let us discuss how David appears as a “polyphonic hero,” from the Bakhtinian understanding of dialogue. Polyphony emerges from *a particular kind of rereading* of a particular work of prose. I suggest, from the Bakhtinian perspective, that in the utterance of the Samuel prose dealing with David, more than two distinct voices with two (or more) different

15. Bakhtin, “The Problem of Speech Genres,” 94.

socio-ideological consciousnesses in uneven, unstable, and unending dialogue are heard.¹⁶ Neither voice plays a dominant or subordinate role; each has equal force, making double-voicing possible. In an utterance of double-voicing, one can perceive a voice with an orientation toward someone else's voice.¹⁷ In this double-voicing, especially in the case of disagreement, one does not take precedence over the other, but each has an equal voice or opportunity to speak. Thus, polyphony arises through the presence of conflicting voices with equal rights within a text.

If polyphony refers to the arrangement of diverse voices into a written pattern, the challenge is how to approach the concept of polyphony and expose this distinctive artistic feature from a single work such as the Samuel prose.¹⁸ In order to "implement" (the Bakhtinian) polyphony to a reading of the Samuel prose, one must first reconsider the position of the author. A polyphonic author/narrator may be intentionally situated in a "plurality of equally authoritative ideological positions and an extreme heterogeneity of material,"¹⁹ declining to depend upon any monologic authoritative voice. This special position of the author in a polyphonic work should not be regarded as a weakness on the part of the author, i.e., as a lack of clarity or authorial direction.²⁰ Rather, the polyphonic author allows "a plurality of independent voices with equal rights" to be heard.²¹ If one presupposes the complications of "heteroglossia" (multi-languagedness) in the social worlds of exilic and postexilic communities, then the issue is not an absence of an authorial point of view but a radical shift in the author's position.²² In a polyphonic reading of the Samuel prose, one can presume that the polyphonic author acts as a "participant in the dialogue without retaining for himself the final word."²³

The second and equally important move is to recognize the presence of polyphonic character(s) along with a polyphonic author. A polyphonic character is situated *simultaneously* at (more than) two different socio-linguistic, dialogic oppositions. He/she appears to be free to speak for himself/herself without being entirely controlled or dominated by the authorial viewpoint. Instead of taking for granted the author/narrator's comments about the polyphonic character, the reader has to rely also on the characters' words and actions.²⁴ In other words, a polyphonic hero escapes from the determinacy accomplished by a non-polyphonic author's final judgment. If, in the extant form of (books of) Samuel, one can see David as a polyphonic hero, it would mean that the words about David in Samuel are *not* finalized from the point of view of either the author/narrator or the reader/audience.

16. The two voices may also represent more than one value system that is recognized and disputed in the consciousnesses of a single person.

17. Bakhtin states that "discourse has a twofold direction—it is directed both toward the referential object of speech, as in ordinary discourse, and toward *another's discourse*, toward *someone else's speech*" See Bakhtin, "Discourse in Dostoevsky," in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 185 (author's emphasis).

18. In Bakhtin's thought, polyphony is not an attribute of all novels, but specifically a distinctive artistic feature of Dostoevskian novelistic discourse. According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel, stating: "in our opinion Dostoevsky alone can be considered the creator of genuine polyphony" (Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel and Its Treatment in Critical Literature," in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 34). In this paper, I deal with the issue of recognizing polyphony in a single work of the Samuel prose.

19. Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel," 18.

20. Polyphony is often criticized as a theory that lacks authorial (narratorial) point of view, but Bakhtin explicitly states that the polyphonic author (narrator) neither lacks nor fails to express his/her ideas and values.

21. See Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel," 18; Bakhtin, "The Hero in Dostoevsky's Art," in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 66–67.

22. See Bakhtin, "The Hero in Dostoevsky's Art," 67.

23. *Ibid.*, 72.

24. See Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (New York: St. Martins Press), 116.

I argue that the indeterminacy and unfinalizability of David, as a polyphonic hero, is a crucial dimension of Samuel's (and DH's) polyphony. I examine how, as a character represented with a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices,"²⁵ David remains undecidable and unstable in the prose of Samuel, and how both the author's and the audience's judgments of David are constantly being deferred in terms of the dialogic nature of the Samuel prose.

Let us now look at several chapters in 1 and 2 Samuel; in this paper, I focus specifically on David's relation with the Philistines in 1 Samuel and his "unfinalizable" relation with Yhwh in 2 Samuel. First, I shall examine how the utterances regarding David's exile in Philistia unfold in 1 Samuel. Many scholars note that references to the Philistines are rather numerous in Samuel. The Philistine threat is often understood by commentators to be a major impetus for the request for a king in 1 Samuel. Indeed, it is commonly viewed that the Philistines are *the* enemy of the military camps of Saul and David in 1 and 2 Samuel.

In line with this perspective, some scholars have recently observed the Philistines are depicted as "a clear 'other'" in 1 Samuel.²⁶ Jobling comments that "[the indication of] Philistine otherness is clearly shown in the efforts...of the LXX translators"—whose translation of "Philistines" in 1 Samuel is *allophuloi* ("strangers" or "others").²⁷ It is claimed that the connotation of Philistine otherness was carried into modern European discourses that identify a specific group of people as Philistines, that is, as a class of people who had technological superiority while being culturally or intellectually inferior within the context of modern Europe.²⁸ Similarly, the English *Philistine* has long denoted otherness in Judeo-Christian culture.²⁹ These biases seem to be rooted in 1 Samuel's depiction of the Philistines as the inimical and inferior other, which is conveyed through the use of "uncircumcised" (14:6; 17:26, 36; 31:4),³⁰ "dog" (17:43),³¹ the "enemies" of Saul (18:25), etc., even though the Philistines were, after all, technologically (if not culturally) superior *and* usually victorious in 1 Samuel.³²

25. Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel," 6.

26. See Trude Dothan and Robert L. Cohn, "The Philistine as Other: Biblical Rhetoric and Archaeological Reality," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn (New York & London: New York University Press, 1994), 61–73; David Jobling and Catherine Rose, "Reading as a Philistine: The Ancient and Modern History of a Cultural Slur," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 381–417; Jobling, *1 Samuel* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 197–243; Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?: A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel* (London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 126, n. 10.

27. See Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 215–16, 242.

28. Cf. *Ibid.*, 208.

29. According to Dothan and Cohn, "The Philistine as Other," 61, the English *Philistine*, the German *Philister*, and the French *Philistin* has denoted "otherness" in Judeo-Christian culture since the seventeenth century, and all the more so after Matthew Arnold, the English critic, gave it significant currency in the nineteenth century. Not in discontinuity with this argument, Jobling and Rose attempt to show how the prominent works of the German Romantic Clemens Brentano and of the English intellectual Matthew Arnold influenced modern discourses about "fantasizing the Philistines" in order to "fantasize" class struggle of modern times. See Jobling and Rose, "Reading as a Philistine," 382–95, and Jobling, *1 Samuel*, especially 199–211.

30. Jobling observes that the individual hero (e.g., David, Jonathan, or perhaps, Saul) who battles a multitude of Philistines refers to the Philistines as uncircumcised. However, he comments that "it is not found in the accounts of David with the Philistines in chs. 21, 27–29." See Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 215.

31. The description of "dog" comes from the Philistine Goliath's own question to David, "Am I a dog that you come against me with sticks?" The animalistic imagery found in Goliath's words seems to be based in or prefigured by David's report to Saul, "your servant has killed both lion and bear; and that uncircumcised Philistine shall end up like one of them, for he has defied the ranks of the living God" (17:36).

32. Cf. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 214. Jobling clearly sees the tension between the biblical fantasy of the Philistine Other

The Philistines' self-representations and interactions with David in the exilic time-space are complex. After being privately anointed by Samuel in the presence of his family (1 Sam 16), the young David immediately encounters the intricacies of Israelite interrelationships with the Philistines. In the Deuteronomistic dichotomy of the "enemy" (אֹיֵב *oyeb*) of the Philistines and the "servant" (עֶבֶד *`ebed*) of Saul and Yhwh, David successfully defeats Goliath the Philistine, an accomplishment that is supposed to secure Israel's primacy and Philistia's "servanthood" (17:9). Following this event, the Philistines become the lifelong enemy of David and his kingship, on one hand: David would have to meet them in battle until he "grew weary" in age (2 Sam 21:15). From the perspective of polyphonic relation, on the other hand, David's relationship with the Philistines alludes to something beyond the Deuteronomistic dichotomy of enemy and servant; in the exilic time-space, the two roles become rather obscured.

A brief review of select interactions between David, the Philistines, and Israelites further substantiates this view of the complicated relations in the exilic time-space. David fights against the Philistines to save the people of Keilah (23:1–5), but learns from Yhwh that the people he successfully defended would, indeed, deliver him into Saul's hands (23:10–12). David manages to escape from Keilah and stays in the wilderness of Ziph, but he learns that, again, Saul has come there to find him (23:15). This time some Ziphites travel to Gibeah and inform Saul that "David is hiding among [them] in the strongholds of Horesh" (23:19). When David's life is in jeopardy in (for?) Judah, what stops Saul from pursuing David and his men is, surprisingly, the Philistines (23:24–26): a messenger tells Saul, "Come quickly, for the Philistines have invaded the land," so Saul ceases his pursuit of David and meets the Philistines in battle (23:27–28).

The preceding clearly demonstrates a point of separation between David and the people from his own community (e.g., the inhabitants of Keilah and the Ziphites), which is made explicit in 1 Sam 23:28: that is why that place came to be called the "Rock of Separation" (*Sela Hammahlekoth*). This separation leads David into exile in Philistia since, as he says to himself, "The best thing for me is to flee to the land of the Philistines; Saul will then give up hunting me throughout the territory of Israel, and I will escape him" (27:1).

David, who was once Saul's servant against the Philistine Goliath (17:8, 32, 34, 36), now becomes the servant of the Philistine king during his exile in Gath and Ziklag (27:5). When David asks King Achish for a town in the country to live in, the Philistine grants him Ziklag (27:6). Although David lies to Achish about attacking the Negeb of Judah, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites (27:10), Achish trusts David, and says to himself, "he has aroused the wrath³³ of his own people Israel, and so he will be my servant forever" (27:12).

Achish is apparently deceived by David's words about the areas he raided. Achish may be fooled by David, but is not at all disadvantaged by having David fight for him and present the booty (27:9): David becomes the "servant" of Achish, and the Philistine king becomes David's "lord" in exile. The change(s) of David's space from Judah to Philistia complicates the dichotomic relations between the time-space of the enemy and that of the lord in exile. In exile, the difference between who becomes David's enemy and his lord depends upon the time-space in which the hero David is situated. The time-space of exile in Philistia not only provides David and his men safety from Saul's pursuit (27:4), but also succeeds in making Achish trust David as

and a more realistic view of the Philistine. He argues that "If 1 Samuel stages a long battle between Israelites and Philistines, it also stages a battle between two views of the Philistines. If in the first battle the Philistines win, in the second reality wins (though only momentarily in both cases). These two victories are one and the same" (ibid., 241–42). To Jobling, 1 Samuel may be read as the book of "the Philistine ascendancy."

33. Literally, became "malodorous" to.

his servant. As a servant of the Philistine Achish, David appears not to shy away from becoming the enemy of Saul by volunteering to join Philistine attacks against Saul's camp (29:8). When Achish says to David, "you know, of course, that you and your men must march out with my forces," David answers, "you surely know what your servant will do" (28:1–2). With this show of "loyalty," David, the anointed one of Israel, is set to become Achish's bodyguard for life (28:2).

When David hears from Achish that the Philistine officers attempted to exclude David from the Philistines' attack against Saul, he challenges Achish's decision: "what have I done, what fault have you found in your servant...that I should not go and fight against the *enemies* of my lord the king?" (29:8). David remarks on the Israelite forces as the enemy in front of Achish. In order for David to fight against Saul, the Philistine becomes lord to David. In response to the important question of why David flees to Philistia and not elsewhere, Jobling answers that "it *must* be the Philistines who dispose of Saul."³⁴ The audience never hears whether or not David actually trusts Achish (as Achish trusts him) in the context of battle; however, the audience may now recognize Saul as both the enemy³⁵ and the lord of David, while the Philistine Achish is David's king (and enemy) in exile. In fact, David never refers to either Saul or Achish as his enemy; rather, for both of them he uses the ambiguous designation of "my lord the king," which has a dual, polyphonic implication. Caught between serving and fighting for two different "masters," Saul and Achish, David remains both the enemy and servant of each one.

When David flees from Saul and goes to Achish for the first time in chapter 21, David is immediately recognized as the king of Israel: "that's David, king of the land!" (21:12). In fact, the Philistines remind Achish not once but twice that David is "the one of whom they sing as they dance: Saul has slain his thousands; David, his tens of thousands" (21:12; 29:5). These words are worrisome to David, who is naturally afraid of Achish. When David is so lauded as an enemy to the Philistines, one even stronger and more threatening than Saul, he disguises himself as a mad man, as impotent and thus harmless: he scratches marks on the doors of the gate and lets saliva run down his beard (21:14). And Achish is deceived by David's tactics once again.³⁶

In exile, David, both the enemy and servant of the Philistines, becomes impotent and harmless in the eyes of the Philistines. David performs as if he "knows" that different times-spaces understand and navigate the world differently. Would David have turned against the Philistines in battles in his exile? (cf. 29:4). David situates himself as the servant of the foreign king in the exilic time-space. On the other hand, although Achish thought that David would serve him forever (27:12), the audience knows that each time-space understands the world differently: the-once-enemy David of Judah becomes the-temporary-servant of exile. Soon David as a polyphonic hero will cease to disguise himself as harmless and will boast about his defeat of the Philistines: "The LORD has broken through my *enemies* before me as waters break through [a dam]" (2 Sam 5:20).

34. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 235. He argues that David flees to Philistia "for refuge from Saul, but perhaps also to find a new master" (241). According to Jobling, this new master plays an instrumental role in assisting the transition from Saul to David: "there is hardly any reference to them [the Philistine] that does not directly serve David's rise" (223). See Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 223–41, for more detail.

35. In fact, David never refers to Saul as his enemy, although he calls Saul "my lord the king." On the other hand, Saul speaks of David as his enemy (e.g., 19:17; 24:20). Cf. Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 251.

36. Whether Achish is portrayed as easily deceived or as attempting to exploit David's seeming impotence remains unresolved in the prose. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 239, comments that "David's inevitable rise to kingship is left intact. Achish's gullibility is left intact."

From the perspective of the polyphonic relation, the Deuteronomistic dichotomy of enemy and servant loses its naïveté—it sees itself from the perspective of each time-space, and comes to understand how its time-space appears differently to David in exile, which welcomes indeterminacy and indecision.³⁷ The polyphonic hero David as an enemy and a servant in exile cannot be finalized; the image of David in exile in the represented world is always open rather than closed to the imagined worlds of the author and of the audience in (post)exile.

As the above discussion hinted, I suggest that the distinct and indissoluble relations among the author, the hero, and the audience generate dialogue in the imagined world of (post)exile. In the (post)exilic world, the author is not situated outside the hero—and is thereby incapable of finalizing the image of the hero—but located on the same plane as the hero and the audience. As such, David can be recognized as a polyphonic hero who becomes the “unfinalizable other” to the author and audience.

In a monologic understanding, an author’s “surplus of vision” finalizes a character. According to Bakhtin, “all the clamps and finalizing moments of [the monologic work]...lie in the zone of authorial ‘surplus,’ a zone that is fundamentally inaccessible to the consciousnesses of the characters.”³⁸ That is, the author knows more than either the characters or the audience. Such an author can be seen as omniscient (or at least selectively omniscient) and reliable. On the other hand, the polyphonic author does not know and finalize everything about the characters. The author “never retains any essential ‘surplus’ of *meaning*.... For if any essential surplus of meaning were available to the author, it would transform the great dialogue of the [work]...into a finalized and objectivized dialogue,” argues Bakhtin.³⁹ The author is engaging with characters and audience in an act of mutual discovery.

In line with this specific position, the author presents himself/herself as neither superior nor inferior to the character, and so the polyphonic hero emerges as relatively “free and independent.” The polyphonic hero becomes not “voiceless” but rather communicative with the author and the audience as well. Thus, in a polyphonic work, one encounters “someone who hears him (the author) and is *capable of answering him*.”⁴⁰ As Bakhtin claims, polyphonic heroes are “*free people, capable of standing alongside their creator [author], capable of not agreeing*

37. “[A] language that has entered into dialogue with another language, especially if that dialogue concerns the topic or experience to which the language is specially adapted, loses its ‘naïveté.’ It becomes self-conscious, because it has seen itself from an alien perspective and has come to understand how its own values and beliefs appear to the other language... [S]uch a language can no longer directly and unself-consciously talk about its topic as if there were no other plausible way of doing so... [The language] not only represents the world, but *imagines* itself as the object of representation; its words, therefore, more or less turn into “words of the third type.” Morson and Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 310 (emphasis mine).

38. Bakhtin, “The Hero in Dostoevsky’s Art,” 72. Bakhtin states that each of us enjoys a “surplus of vision” in relations to others. That is, one can see what the other looks like when he or she is unself-conscious of one’s appearance (e.g., the back of one’s own head). In monologic works, the author “enjoys an enormous and fundamental ‘surplus’ in comparison with the fields of vision of the characters” (ibid., 70-72).

39. Ibid., 73 (author’s emphasis). Bakhtin claims that the polyphonic author may still retain “that indispensable minimum of pragmatic, purely *information-bearing* ‘surplus’ necessary to carry forward the story” (author’s emphasis). What the polyphonic author may not do is retain for himself/herself “a superior position beyond these pragmatic necessities.” Morson and Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 242, explain that “it is as if the author could pick the hour and room for a dialogic encounter with a character, but once he himself had entered that room, he would have to address the character as an equal.”

40. Bakhtin, “The Hero in Dostoevsky’s Art,” 63 (author’s emphasis).

with him.”⁴¹ The polyphonic hero, thus, becomes “unfinalizable” with respect to the author and the audience; each participant engages in a genuinely open dialogue. Conversely, in a monologic construction of characters, characters do not enjoy this freedom from the authorial voice; instead, their voices may exist in hierarchical order where a single voice remains dominant, as in “authoritative discourses.”⁴²

Below I will explore how David, as a polyphonic hero, is represented as the “unfinalizable other” who enters into dialogue on an equal footing with the author. In other words, David becomes capable of demonstrating his own surplus with respect to the author as well as to the audience. Compared with and contrasted to the polyphonic hero David, Saul may be represented as lacking surplus (or, arguably, has no surplus at all), and so he is more finalizable than not. The audience may be sympathetic to Saul in that he is “Israel’s first king” and he never “applied” for that job.⁴³ Nevertheless, Saul can hardly surprise the audience and the author; he is still under the control of the surplus of the authorial ideology of DH. “The rejection of Saul’s house... should not come as a complete surprise.”⁴⁴

So, even when Saul begins to appear as though he could be breaking free of Deuteronomistic control, he is quickly resubjected to the Deuteronomistic dichotomy of blessings and curses from Yhwh. David, on the other hand, is not completely under control of the authorial ideology. In 1 Sam 13–15, while Saul is faithfully fulfilling his kingly duty of commanding the troops, his kingship is rejected initially by Samuel and ultimately by Yhwh: Saul certainly executes the standard of “justice” (מִשְׁפָּט *mishpat*; cf. 8:9, 11) anticipated in the people’s request for their king in chapter 8 (i.e., to go out and fight their battles). A king’s military actions are considered “just” to the Israelites from the very beginning of Samuel’s warning against kingship (8:11). In accordance with this standard of kingly “justice” (cf. 10:25), Saul kills the Ammonites in attempt to defend Jabesh-Gilead (chapter 11), fights against the Philistines who are attempting to exert political dominance (chapters 13–14), and executes the Amalekites who have a history of ruthless aggression against Israel (chapter 15).

Even though Saul proves to be a successful war leader (as the narrator comments in 14:47–48), his kingship becomes jeopardized at Gilgal when he acts like a judge (and priest) by making the offering in Samuel’s absence (chapter 13). If one considers how Samuel’s initial instruction in 10:8 (to wait seven days) actually leads to the event of sacrificing offerings in ch. 13, Samuel’s labeling Saul’s actions as foolish becomes rather absurd. Moreover, the audience will wonder about what constitutes the commands of Yhwh to which Samuel refers. Samuel instantly disavows Saul’s kingship, stating to Saul that “if you had kept the commandment the LORD your God laid upon you, the LORD would have established your dynasty over Israel forever” (13:13). Bruce Birch questions, “Is the failure to follow Samuel’s instructions the equivalent of violating the commandment of the Lord? Is the punishment announced by Samuel

41. Bakhtin, “Dostoevsky’s Polyphonic Novel,” 6, argues that Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel and of “free people” in this new novelistic genre: “Dostoevsky, like Goethe’s Prometheus, creates not voiceless slaves (as does Zeus), but *free* people, capable of standing *alongside* their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him.”

42. See Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 342.

43. Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 126–7, points out the difficulty that the firstborn sons are facing and relates it to Saul’s being firstborn king: “In the book of Genesis, the first born son is usually a loser: from Cain to Manasseh, the first born has a difficult run of form, and innumerable scholars have pointed out that God consistently thwarts the principle of primogeniture throughout the book of Genesis. Saul is Israel’s first born king in a pattern ‘just like the nations.’ So, in a reversal of *royal* primogeniture (akin to the pattern in Genesis), Saul fails just like any first born son.”

44. *Ibid.*, 127.

out of proportion to the offense?”⁴⁵ Focusing on each character’s disposition, he notes, “Saul seems well meaning and concerned for his people. Samuel seems angry, temperamental, and reactionary.”⁴⁶ In the midst of this absurdity of why Saul deserved this fate, Saul’s kingdom is forfeited by Samuel, who claims that Yhwh has already appointed someone else after his own heart (13:14). Even though Saul carefully and diligently responds to his people, and successfully defeats Israel’s enemies in battle, his kingship becomes invalidated according to the authorial ideology that “you have not kept the LORD’s commandment” (v. 14).

Saul is not the first person in the flow of Deuteronomistic history to cause the camp of Israel “to be liable” (cf. *cherem*, Josh 6:18) to the dichotomy of obedience and disobedience in the authorial ideology of DH. In Josh 7, Achan is condemned by Joshua for bringing calamity upon the community by taking from the “proscribed” (*cherem*) spoils of Jericho, i.e., a fine mantle from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels (Josh 7:21). For the well-being of the rest community, Achan, his family (his sons and daughters), and all his belongings are destroyed at the Valley of Achor (Josh 7:24–26).

According to the authorial ideology that “you must beware of that which is proscribed, or else you will be proscribed” (Josh 6:18), Achan was charged in violation of *cherem*. So is Saul. In 1 Sam 15, Samuel conveys the words of Yhwh to Saul that he must attack Amalekites and proscribe (*charam*) all that belongs to them (15:3); however, Saul spares Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the animals. Samuel claims that Saul rejected the word of Yhwh; indeed, Yhwh rejects Saul as a king on the basis of this same Deuteronomistic ideology (15:23, 26). Saul’s kingship was, therefore, revoked mainly because he did not listen to the voice of Yhwh (15:11, 24) and did not *charam*—he was not rejected for failing to exhibit the “justice” of kingship by successfully defeating Israel’s enemies. Saul himself becomes the “*cherem*” of the kingship as he is also subject to the Deuteronomistic dichotomy of obedience and disobedience.

As Samuel claims, if Yhwh takes the initiative to choose Saul as king, Saul takes the initiative to reject Yhwh (*shub* in 15:11; cf. *ma’as* in 15:23, 26). Saul admits to Samuel that he did wrong (15:24, 30), and Yhwh tells Samuel that he regrets (*nacham*) that he made Saul king (15:11). This distresses Samuel: Yhwh, in his relationship to Saul, reveals himself to be vulnerable, and thus liable to change.⁴⁷ Although Samuel asserts that Yhwh “is not a man that He should change (*nacham*) His mind” (15:29), Yhwh changes his mind after he learns that Saul has changed his mind (cf. vv. 23, 26). Yhwh changes with (by?) a man, and he moves on to give the kingdom to another, “who is worthier than Saul” (v. 28). Just a few verses later, interestingly, the narrator confirms Yhwh in v. 11, disconfirms Samuel in v. 29, and states that Yhwh regretted (*nacham*) making Saul king” (v. 35).⁴⁸ Rather than remaining unchangeable for Saul’s kingship, Yhwh changes himself to become the “enemy” (*ar*) of Saul (cf. 28:16). Indeed, Yhwh never responds to Saul’s asking again (see 14:37; 28:6).

On the other hand, Yhwh’s relationship to David is more complex. The one who is supposedly “worthier” in Samuel’s eyes becomes the unfinalizable other in his relation to Yhwh.

45. Bruce Birch, “The First and Second Books of Samuel: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflection,” in vol. 2 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 1072.

46. Ibid.

47. Green, *King Saul’s Asking* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003), 59, comments that “God seems to back away from Saul, not so much contend with as withdraw from him.”

48. It is worth noting that 1 Sam 15 uses the verb *nacham* for the subject Yhwh, rather than the verb *shub*, which is used for Saul. However, it should be noted that the verb *shub* is, in fact, used for Yhwh in Josh 7:26: “Then the anger of the LORD subsided,” i.e., “Yhwh turned from his burning anger.”

For example, in 2 Sam 11, David's sin in killing Uriah and taking his wife Bathsheba is subject neither to the legal code that requires a fourfold restitution (12:6; cf. Ex. 21:37) nor to a "subjective" judgment that the man deserves to die (12:5). Certainly, David would not die for that particular sin (12:13), as the prophet Nathan declares. Rather, Yhwh will bring calamity on the house of David: the sword will never depart from David's house forever (עֹלָם *olam*) (12:10). Yhwh's dealing with David's sin is not subject to any laws of causality or the Deuteronomistic regulation; rather, it is conditioned by Yhwh's own promise to build the house of David "forever" (עֹלָם *olam*, 2 Sam 7:13, 16). In his relationship with Yhwh, David's sin escapes authorial control and the binary opposition of obedience and disobedience. Therefore, David's sin is not considered to be subject to the "prescriptive" authorial ideology of blessings and curses from Yhwh; rather, Yhwh will deal with the house of David forever with the sword. From now on, David's house will face the tragic history of assassinating family members, which only affirms the dishonorable title of David as "a man of blood" (2 Sam 16:8).

In contrast to David's sin of taking Bathsheba and killing Uriah, a single act of taking the plunder from battles is itself not considered to be sin in the prose of DH. For example, in Josh 8:2, Joshua is allowed by Yhwh to take the booty after attacking Ai; in 2 Sam 12:26–31, David carries off a large amount of booty from the city of Ammon. According to the Deuteronomistic voice, Joshua's and David's plundering are not sinful to Yhwh; what is sinful of Saul is to not hear what he was supposed to hear from the voice of Yhwh.

Saul "spares" (חמל *chamal*) and takes the best of the sheep to sacrifice to Yhwh (1 Sam 15:3, 9, 15), and David "spares" (חמל *chamal*) his own "sheep" (2 Sam 12:4, 6).⁴⁹ In sparing, Saul becomes liable to the Deuteronomistic voice of Yhwh; David, as the polyphonic hero, comes to present his own surplus with respect to Yhwh and to the Deuteronomistic narrator.⁵⁰ What is created is the unending struggle in the house of David, and thus the recurring tension between David and Yhwh in an immediate future that is open and free.⁵¹ Rather than being subject to the Deuteronomistic voice, David participates in dialogue with that voice as an equal. Thus, the polyphonic David stands "above the word, above the voice, above the accent"⁵² in 1 and 2 Samuel.

The polyphonic David enjoys his own surplus of vision with respect to the author, the audience, and other characters. In the face of David's relative freedom and independence, the Deuteronomistic voice of Yhwh cannot finalize the hero or determine his fate, nor is Yhwh supposed to know about the immediate future of the hero. The vulnerable Yhwh simply turned away from Saul, yet with the polyphonic David Yhwh becomes the "prosaic God," who is continuously questioned by and in dialogue with the hero David. He answers David's inquiries (1 Sam 23:2, 4, 10–12; 30:8; 2 Sam 2:1; 5:19), but remains silent when Saul asks (1 Sam 14:37;

49. The verb חמל (*chamal*) appears several times in 1 Sam 15 (vv. 3, 9, 15) and 2 Sam 12 (vv. 4, 6.). McCarter reads 2 Sam 12:6b as "and spared what belongs to him" (*w'l 'sr lw hml*) in preference to MT's "and because he had no compassion" (*w'l 'sr l'hml*). Thus, McCarter argues that "the verb 'chamal' has the same meaning in its occurrences in vv. 4 ('but he spared') and 6 ('and spared')." See McCarter, *II Samuel*. (AB 9; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), 294.

50. Fewell argues that "the failure of David to pay the penalties for his own sins disrupts and subverts the Deuteronomist's rigid system of justice where good is rewarded and evil punished." See Fewell, "A Broken Hallelujah: Remembering David, Justice, and the Cost of the House," in *The Fate of King David: The Past and Present of a Biblical Icon*, ed. Timothy Beal, Tod Linafelt, and Claudia Camp (New York: Continuum Press, 2010), 118.

51. Morson and Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 411, state "By 'the future,' Bakhtin means... a future that is not utopian or eschatological, but rather immediate and concrete."

52. Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel," 43.

28:6).⁵³ However, Yhwh never initiates a *tête-à-tête* with David as he does when conversing with Samuel (or later, Nathan); Yhwh only responds to the utterances of David. As a result, conversations are mostly controlled by David, initiated by his own vision of (military) strategy. For example, David inquires, “Shall I go and attack those Philistines?” (1 Sam 23:2); “Will the citizens of Keilah deliver me [and my men] into Saul’s hands?” (1 Sam 23:11, 12); “Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? (1 Sam 23:11); “Shall I pursue those [the Amalekite] raiders?” (30:8); “Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?” (2 Sam 2:1); “Which one shall I go up to?” (2 Sam 2:1); “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?” (2 Sam 5:19). Most of Yhwh’s responses are simply “yes.” Yhwh cannot control David’s surplus; instead, he enters into the conversation on an equal footing with the hero.

After Yhwh initiates the process of anointing David, he hardly takes any initiative in his relation to David such as he does later when talking to Nathan. Even Yhwh’s active revelation of his words to Nathan actually reflects his passive response to David’s initial thoughts (2 Sam 7). Yhwh does not speak to David until David initiates the conversation; he does not act until he has to respond to David’s ambitions or indiscretions. In his relation to David, Yhwh is rather passively responsive, less controlling of the Deuteronomistic regulations, and thus, relatively on equal footing with David.

Given the nature of their relationship, it becomes clear that Yhwh hardly speaks with a voice of authority in relation to the hero. Although Yhwh’s own voice may heavily depend upon the (authorial) instructive voice, that is, the Deuteronomistic voice, the hero is not controlled or fixed by it. Rather than becoming voiceless or yielding, the polyphonic hero converses with the authorial voice as well as that of the audience; David participates himself in an unfinalizable tension between speaker and listener. As a result, the image of David as a polyphonic hero is open in the prose of 1 and 2 Samuel to the author and the audience who do not always know but continuously wonder about the hero’s freedom.

III. Conclusion

When one perceives the utterance (or speech act) from the perspective of speech communication and the speech genres, it cannot be considered an “individual entity” in the precise meaning of the term. Any utterance is already a response to the utterances of others, and always anticipates the responsive utterances of others. As opposed to Saussure’s view of an utterance as a “thoroughly individual entity,” to Bakhtin the utterance is a social phenomenon. Bakhtin concludes that, when Saussure defines the utterance as an individual act (*la parole*), he ignores the speech genres and therefore disregards the “social interrelationships” that affect and determine the conditions of utterance. Bakhtin argues for the multivoiced nature of utterance that

53. Scholars have generally agreed that this absence of dialogue of Yhwh with Saul shows that Yhwh favors David and thus responds to him: Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen*, 456, argues that “God under-relates with Saul, insofar as God speaks only *of* Saul and never *with* him. It is a pattern shown changed in the representation of the David-YHWH relationship.” J. P. Fokkelman comments that David “always asks at crucial times and is answered” (*Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analysis: Volume II: The Crossing Fates* [Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1986], 430). Mark K. George, “Yhwh’s Own Heart,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64 (2002): 454, n. 39, points out that “Saul does receive an answer to the lots in 1 Sam 14:41–42, but the narrative only records who was indicated by the lot; there is no dialogue recorded between Saul and Yhwh.” These kinds of readings only emphasize, in contrast, Saul’s inability in his relating with Yhwh and David’s capability of conversing with Yhwh.

unexpectedly lives between speaker and listener, and becomes multivoiced: it is a social phenomenon.

Recognizing the utterance as a social phenomenon from the Bakhtinian perspective, it becomes clear that it would be impossible to find a neatly ordered, monologic character in David. It would be equally impossible to represent a monologic conclusion to what the exile means to readers, both ancient and contemporary. Reconceiving the prose in this fashion sets aside all reading strategies that presuppose the Samuel prose as an individual entity. That is, I do not attempt to ask and answer what sorts of forms and images the character of David represents, or what kinds of authorial (i.e., Deuteronomistic) ideologies the prose advances regarding the topic of exile, as though driven by monologic assumptions. Instead, this paper asks and answers how and why the character of David can be represented as the kind of hero who is not subject to authorial control or determined by monologic conclusion, but remains open to interpretation in the immediate (postexilic) future and beyond.

I argue that David is represented as a hero who can actually develop and change through the (polemical) process of speech communication and of “social becoming.” An utterance, with such a hero, becomes multifaceted and multivoiced in terms of the verbal interaction between speaker and listener. From this point of view, the prose of David cannot under any circumstances be considered to result from an individual speech act; it is radically implemented in the exchange of dialogue that continually develops in ways that can surprise both speaker and listener.

In this paper, I argue that polyphony can emerge from *a particular kind of rereading* of a particular work of prose. That is, my work on polyphony includes discussions of both the text (design and content) of 1 and 2 Samuel and a reading of DH (interpretations and strategies of reading). In order to explain polyphony in a reading of the prose, I have dealt with the special position of the author in dialogue without retaining for himself (herself) the final word, and have suggested the presence of a polyphonic hero David who remains undecidable and unstable in the prose of Samuel.

In a polyphonic rereading of prose of David, new dialogic relationships between the author and other dialogue participants are unfolded in contrast to a structure of philosophical monologism, which would require a finalized and determined reading. Therefore, several other monologic points of view concerning a Davidic hero and the Davidic kingship may be accepted and even required, rather than completely disclaimed, in a polyphonic mode of reading of the Samuel prose containing several other potential voices open to the future of a polyphonic hero in (post)exile. A polyphonic reading of the hero David rejects the monologic isolation and allows the dialogic interactions through which multiple voices can be actually heard at the same time on equal terms.

In a monologic understanding of Samuel, such as the structuralist understanding of the implied author and the narrator in DH, at the center there is necessarily a single leading voice that demands validity and relevance, despite complicating and contradictory contents. For example, in employing a Bakhtinian method to analyze the interplay of the voices of the narrator and characters, Polzin states, “Bakhtin summarizes the characteristics of a novel that is basically monologic in structure; his words are equally valid for a work such as the Deuteronomic History.”⁵⁴ Such a reading tends to posit the prose (of Samuel and DH) as a monologic text from the perspective of the “ideological and evaluative point of view” of the author, that is, the Deuteronomist. This authorial voice locates other voices around the center, but claims to be more

54. Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 21.

authoritative and authentic than other voices. In treating the DH text as “basically monologic in structure,” the ideological voice of the Deuteronomist controls and predominates over the construction of other diverse ideologies in DH.⁵⁵

Contradictions and complications in the language of DH are raised and resolved by this single, authoritative, authentic voice. The voice at the center seeks power over others. In contrast, in a polyphonic view of the text, there is no voice located at the center; the one personal style and tone here become “only one subordinate element” in respect to others. If any voice—of the author, hero, or audience—claims to be at the center, the polyphonic design is broken and the discourse returns to a monologic mode.

In polyphony, there exists no power that exclusively belongs to one voice. Each voice contributing to the indeterminacy and unfinalizability of David as a polyphonic hero retains some capacity to represent a different reality in a particular work of the Samuel prose. The capacity of each voice to make itself heard by others is required to maintain the crucial dimension of the polyphonic design of Samuel; however, each voice also restrains the others from holding power and taking absolute control at the center. Each voice contributes to keeping the others from claiming to be more authoritative or more authentic.

These dialogic interrelations between voices are considered both relatively independent and relatively free. Without the presence of any controlling voice located at the center, no voice is able to represent absolute authority or freedom in respect to the others. All become dialogically interdependent rather than absolutely independent. Moreover, their dialogic relations do not relativize *differences* between voices by rendering them invisible or “unnecessary.”⁵⁶ In polyphony, differences coexist as the participants see themselves through the eyes of others and become self-conscious, in terms of dialogic relativity rather than absolute relativity.

A Bakhtinian approach to the prose account of David in Samuel invites a rereading from the perspective of a *non-authoritative, but “internally dialogized”* utterance of Samuel and DH, and thus provides a new way of understanding the interrelations of space, time, social context, character, speaker, and audience in the prose of Samuel.

This Bakhtinian understanding of words and world attacks the notion that language is somehow a system or science, whether closed or open. Bakhtin argues for the unsystematic and unexpected dialogue between two voices in order to highlight the relational and deferred meaning of language. Rereading the Samuel prose from a Bakhtinian perspective does not presuppose any semantic authority of the text nor seek after any authorial/narratorial point of view or any single dominant ideology behind the text from the standpoint of a language system. Although searching out the meaning(s) of the text and the authorial (Deuteronomistic) point(s) of view have been popular strategies in literary studies of the text of Samuel and that of DH, this study shifts from such attempts, and rather observes that the polyphonic understanding of the text always represents a *different* meaning in shaping an utterance(s) of the text under the various conditions of time, space, social context, character, and audience. Thus, the claim for the authority of the text and that of its author loses its grounds in the face of the dialogized language that emerges out of the changing conditions of the exile and post-exile.

55. According to Polzin, “The Deuteronomic History is not the intersection of two equally weighted words, but the conjoining of God’s word to the narrator’s word in a dominant to subordinate relationship respectively” (ibid., 22).

56. Bakhtin, “The Hero in Dostoevsky’s Art,” 69, cautions that absolute relativism excludes “all argumentation, all authentic dialogue, by making it...unnecessary.”

What is at stake is not a system of linguistics but *real people's actions* in response to the “messiness” of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the deportation of royal authorities to Babylon. This paper, thus, interprets the prose in Samuel and DH as an utterance that always lies in a moment of a continuously open process of speech communication. From this perspective, utterance is not an individual speech act, but represents the acts of dialogic interactions between individuals. The familiar and intimate contact between the speaker and the listener occurs outside the framework of social hierarchy, without rank (grammar and structure).

A Bakhtinian dialogic reading of the Samuel prose helps one to see the indeterminacy and unfinalizability of the speech communication regarding the hero David (and the Davidic kingship) in a time of uncertainty within the exilic and postexilic communities. The vision of and imagination concerning the hero and the kingship are always in dialogue without determining any final words on the part of the speaker or the audience. No one—speaker, hero, or audience—is allowed to finalize the other in the process of speech communication. In this respect, this paper suggests the roles of and relationships among the democratic author/narrator, the polyphonic character/hero, and the more boisterous audience. What the audience finds in such a new, messy world is an openness to each possibility of life and a way of continuing dialogic relationship between the character(s) and Yhwh and between the speaker and the audience. The DH word along with the (post)exilic world is continuously open to the immediate future and, therefore, the audience is always left to participate freely in the speech communication and to (re)shape the utterances of Samuel and DH, which results in tension-filled conflicting points of view, directions, and ideologies.