

MASTERTHESIS
ENTANGLED AGENCY AND ISAIAH 11:1-10
Meeting Entangled in the Middle



M.J. Bijdevaate
S2000458
Vakgebied: Beliefs

Protestantse Theologische Universiteit Groningen
17 Juni 2023

Begeleiders:
Dr. E.A. Postma
Dr. P.B. Hartog

Beoordelaar:
Dr. J.R. Compaijen

DATAMANAGEMENTPLAN

1. Algemeen

NAAM STUDENT: M.J. Bijdevaate

NAMEN SCRIPTIEBEGELEIDER(S): dr. E.A. Postma & dr. P.B. Hartog

DATUM: 16-6-2023

VERSIE: 1

2. Algemene gegevens over het onderzoek/scriptie-onderwerp

(WERK)TITEL ONDERZOEK/SCRIPTIE:

Entangled Agency and Isaiah 11:1–10; Meeting in the middle

KORTE OMSCHRIJVING VAN ONDERZOEK EN ONDERZOEKSMETHODE(N) :

Entangled agency is een concept dat vanuit de quantum fysica het domein van de religie kan verrijken. Met het oog op ecologische uitdagingen biedt entangled agency inzicht op de relatie tussen alles wat materie is. Dit inzicht biedt een alternatief op een antropocentrische visie tussen mens en natuur. Binnen de theologie is de relatie tussen mens en natuur op spanning gezet in de jaren 70, ecologische theologie zoekt naar vernieuwende inzichten op het gebied van Bijbel en ecologie. Ik onderzoek hoe entangled agency gebruikt kan worden als een onderzoekbaar fenomeen in Jesaja 11:1–10. Jesaja 11:1–10 is hiervoor geschikt door de rijke taal die het biedt over de relatie tussen God, mens en dier. Vervolgens onderzoek ik hoe entangled agency als een methode ingezet kan worden waarbij de intrarelationaliteit tussen God, mens en niet-menselijke creatie wordt getoetst ten opzichte van verschillende doctrines.

TYPEN ONDERZOEKSDATA: Primaire bronnen als: Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, bijbelcommentaren, wetenschappelijke artikelen, wetenschappelijke literatuur

PERIODE WAARIN DATA VERZAMELD WORDEN: februari 2023 – juni 2023

3. Technische aspecten

HARD- EN SOFTWARE: n.v.t.

BESTANDSFORMATEN: Word document en PDF

OMVANG VAN DE DATA (SCHATTING IN MB/GB/TB): n.v.t.

OPSLAG DATA TIJDENS ONDERZOEK: n.v.t.

OPSLAG DATA NA AFLOOP ONDERZOEK: n.v.t.

4. Verantwoordelijkheden

BEHEER DATA GEDURENDE HET ONDERZOEK: n.v.t.

BEHEER DATA NA AFLOOP ONDERZOEK: n.v.t.

5. Juridische en ethische aspecten

EIGENAAR DATA: n.v.t.

PRIVACYGEVOELIGE DATA: NEE

INDIEN JA: HOE WORDEN ZAKEN ALS VEILIGE OPSLAG EN TOESTEMMING VAN BETROKKEN PERSONEN EN/OF ORGANISATIES GEREGELD?

6. Overige zaken

n.v.t.


(In te vullen door thesisbegeleider:)

Goedgekeurd

Niet goedgekeurd. omdat:

Naam, handtekening:

Dr. E. A. Postma



Datum:

16/06/2023

Verklaringenblad masterthesis

Naam student: *M.J. (marco) Bijdevante*

Titel masterthesis: *Entangled Agency and Isaiah 11:1-10
MEETING IN THE MIDDLE.*

VERKLARING VAN ORIGINALITEIT

Hierbij verklaar ik dat bovengenoemde masterthesis uit origineel werk bestaat. De thesis is het resultaat van mijn eigen onderzoek en is alleen door mijzelf geschreven, tenzij anders aangegeven. Waar informatie en ideeën uit andere bronnen zijn overgenomen, wordt dat expliciet, volledig en op passende wijze vermeld in de tekst of in de noten. Een bibliografie is bijgevoegd.

Plaats, datum:

Handtekening:

Groningen 16-6-2023

[Handwritten signature]

TOESTEMMINGSVERKLARING

Hierbij stem ik ermee in dat bovengenoemde masterthesis na goedkeuring beschikbaar wordt gesteld voor opname in de bibliotheekcollectie en dat de metadata beschikbaar worden gesteld aan externe organisaties en/of door de PThU worden gepubliceerd.

Verder verleen ik (de bibliotheek van) de PThU

wel

niet

toestemming voor het opnemen van de volledige tekst in een via internet of anderszins openbaar toegankelijke database. (Deze toestemming betreft alleen de openbaarmaking van de masterthesis, zonder verdere overdracht of inperking van het auteursrecht van de student.)

Plaats, datum:

Handtekening:

Groningen 16-6-2023

[Handwritten signature]

Abstract

In this thesis I will research Isaiah 11:1-10 with the concept of entangled agency. The concept of entangled agency indicates that the relation between humanity and nature is not hierarchical. Moreover, humanity and nature are both acting and entangled agents. The concept of entangled agency complements and contests an anthropocentric view which can be recognised within Biblical texts and the reception of Biblical texts. The concept of entangled agency is employed for a different perspective on the relation between humanity and nature for the sake of dealing with the climate crisis. For the field of theology this thesis will add a hermeneutical tool for recognizing different relations between humanity and nature. From the field of theology, outwardly, reading the Bible from this perspective can provide a theological voice within the discourse about climate change in church and society. The starting point for researching entangled agency is Isaiah 11:1–10 because of the richness of references to nature. In Isaiah 11:1-10 both anthropocentric and entangled agency can be recognised within this text. Exploring ecological hermeneutics, this thesis will argue the presence of entangled agency within Isaiah attesting biblical, ethical and practical implications concerning climate change.

Key words:

Entangled agency, Isaiah 11:1–10, interrelationality, diffraction, salvation, reconciliation, moral influence of biblical text, environmental challenges

Wordcount: 21708, including footnotes.

Preface

With this thesis my study years come to an end. After six years of theology, one in-between year working as a farmer, two years of visual arts and design management, and three years of graphical design, I have a backpack full of experiences and knowledge. I have studied in Zwolle, Utrecht and Groningen. I can add Rotterdam as an extra city that has been a dwelling place during my studies.

And then there is *home-home*, Emmeloord as a starting point in everything. That is where my parents live, where I went to church and where I grew up. And this growing up has been crucial for this thesis. I grew up with a sense of wonder for nature and beauty. Hence, the creative studies which focused on looking for the beauty in creation. That is why I love to photograph, to look through a lens, and capture a moment of elegance.

Next to growing up with amazement for all that lives, I grew up with wonder in faith. In a sense, that is what I tried to achieve with this thesis; bringing these two together. Capture something of the elegance and beauty of creation as a theologian reading and working with the Bible. Without the amazement that my grandparents, Opa Asse en oma Toos, had for nature, I am not sure if I would have ever had the connection with creation, as the way I feel entangled with it now. Moreover, my grandparents have had a major influence on passing along their faith. While writing this thesis, they have been both on my mind with their faithfulness, sense of wonder and compassion.

This thesis could also not have been written without my supervisors dr. Eward Postma and dr. Barry Hartog, who guided me through the process. The conversations with them could only be determined as rich, fun, and helpful in keeping the focus. I want to thank my fellow students, with whom I went together through this thesis writing process. It was great to follow the seminars together, and write in our reserved classrooms while talking and challenging each other's ideas. I also want to pay my respect to my beloved Ilse, who had to bear with me for a second time writing a thesis. First, during my bachelor thesis, and now during my master thesis. Only love and thanks for the support and care during these times.

This thesis is about entanglement, and I am fully aware of the names and people that I forget to mention. I am thankful for everybody I have met, until now. Everybody has been crucial for the theologian and person I am today. It humbles me, and therefore in the end, I can only thank the highest of the highest, God in heaven who is with me on this path towards the holy mountain that is glory. Everything ends, this also counts for my study years. From

here on I await the next step, full of confidence, curiosity, hope, experience, knowledge and joy.

Marco Bijdevaate

June 17th 2023

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 5 |
| Chapter 1: Entangled Agency as an Ecological Theological Hermeneutical Key..... | 7 |
| 1.1 Entangled Agency from an agential realist approach..... | 8 |
| 1.1.1 Debate..... | 8 |
| 1.1.2 Performativity & Agential Realism..... | 10 |
| 1.1.3 Ethical Implications of Agential Realism..... | 11 |
| 1.2 A paradigm of ecological theological hermeneutics..... | 12 |
| 1.2.1 Development..... | 13 |
| 1.2.2 Different approaches to ecological hermeneutics..... | 14 |
| 1.3 Building Entangled Agency as Ecological Theological Hermeneutical Key..... | 20 |
| 1.3.1 Bringing Entangled Agency into the realm of theology..... | 20 |
| 1.3.2 The role of the Bible..... | 25 |
| 1.3.2.1 Transcendence and immanence..... | 26 |
| 1.3.2.2 The role of the prophetic..... | 27 |
| 1.3.3 Evaluation: Entangled agency with and in the Bible..... | 28 |
| Chapter 2: Entangled Agency in Isaiah 11: 1–10..... | 30 |
| 2.1 The source..... | 30 |
| 2.1.1 Translation Isaiah 11: 1–10..... | 31 |
| 2.1.2 Notes..... | 32 |
| 2.2 Entangled Agency In Isaiah 11: 1–10..... | 33 |
| 2.2.1 The non-human creation presented..... | 34 |
| 2.2.2 God’s relationship to creation..... | 37 |
| 2.2.3 Actions and Choices of humanity and the non-human creation..... | 39 |
| 2.3 Evaluation: Entangled Agency in Isaiah 11: 1–10..... | 41 |
| Chapter 3: Entangled Agency with Isaiah 11: 1–10..... | 43 |
| 3.1 Doctrinal constructs..... | 43 |
| 3.1.1 Doctrine of Salvation..... | 45 |
| 3.1.2 Doctrine of Reconciliation..... | 46 |
| 3.1.3 Doctrine of the Moral Influence of the Biblical Text..... | 48 |
| 3.2 Diffraction..... | 50 |
| 3.2.1 How do the text and the doctrine of salvation react to each other?..... | 51 |
| 3.2.2 How do the text and the doctrine of reconciliation react to each other?..... | 51 |
| 3.2.3 How do the text and the doctrine of moral influence react to each other?..... | 53 |
| 3.3 Entangled Agency and Isaiah 11:1–10..... | 54 |
| Conclusion..... | 57 |
| Bibliography..... | 61 |

Introduction

Environmental challenges are a hot topic. Environmental challenges are also a topic that puts tension on a lot of interests. When I took the photo that adorns on the cover of this thesis, I was hiking through nature near the city of Groningen. Within this area there are a lot of pastures, and although I was very enthusiastic about seeing the spoonbill for the first time in my life, I could not ignore the feeling that some birds were also missing, specifically the godwit. Noticing the brief presence of the godwit on the pastures I recognise one environmental challenge that lies ahead. One challenge will be the preservation of our avifauna. Our influence on our pastures, influences how animals will thrive on these pastures. It shows that in our acting, we are entangled with other species in creation. If our acting is in line with moral behaviour towards the non-human creation then perhaps there is hope for a balanced future between humanity and the non-human creation. When I first heard of the concept of entangled agency, which is derived from quantum physics, I was immediately hooked. However, multiple theological questions arose. If I want to implement this within theology, how would that be fruitful? And, can entangled agency be found within the Bible? And if I want to research entangled agency in the Bible, where would I start? Is the Bible not merely about the relationship between God and humanity?

To comprehend entangled agency I will research the concept from an agential realist approach, worked out by Karen Barad. For the implementation of Entangled agency in theology I will approach it from an ecological theological hermeneutical perspective. My starting point in the Bible is Isaiah 11:1–10 because of its richness of natural language and it shows interrelationships between humanity and the non-human creation. Bringing this together, my research question is: “How can entangled agency be employed as an ecological theological hermeneutical key for Isaiah 11:1–10 in light of the relation between humanity and the non-human.” By answering this question I aim to enhance theology with inspiration from outside the realm of theology. I aim to provide a tool for ministers, believers and non-believers for engaging with biblical text from a non-anthropocentric perspective and give handles for approaching environmental challenges in a theological way.

In the first chapter I will focus on entangled agency as a concept based upon theories of Barad. I will focus on the question: how entangled agency can be implemented within an ecological theological and hermeneutical framework? Within this framework, the theories of Hilary Marlow and Ernst Conradie play a significant role. Key concepts related to entangled agency are entanglement, diffraction and response-ability. Key concepts within ecological

theological hermeneutics are from the hermeneutical perspective of theologian Marlow: interrelationality, and ecological triangle. From the hermeneutical perspective of theologian Conradie the key concepts are: salvation, reconciliation, and moral influence. These key concepts will be introduced in this chapter and broadened in the other chapters. I will conclude this chapter with a brief evaluation of entangled agency as hermeneutical key.

In the second chapter I will put entangled agency as hermeneutical key to the test by researching Isaiah 11:1–10. I will focus on the question: how are God, humanity and the non-human creation entangled within Isaiah 11:1–10? I will follow the hermeneutical method of Marlow, who uses an ecological triangle to determine the interrelationality between God, humanity and the non-human creation. I will use this ecological triangle on my own translation and text-critical notes on the text. With the source text as starting point I will then examine the relationship between God, humanity and the non-human creation following predetermined questions that are part of Marlow's method. I will conclude this chapter with a brief evaluation of entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10

In the third chapter I will add an extra layer to researching Isaiah 11:1–10. This entails a meta-understanding of entangled agency where the interpretation of the text relates to different doctrinal constructs in a process of diffraction. Putting the interpretation of Isaiah 11:1–10 from chapter two through this process means employing entangled agency with the Isaiah text as one of the parameters. I will focus on the question: how does entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10 respond to the doctrinal constructs of salvation, reconciliation and the moral influences of biblical texts? I will conclude the chapter with a brief evaluation of entangled agency with Isaiah 11:1–10 and a general evaluation of entangled agency as ecological hermeneutical key.

Bringing in a non-theological concept into the realm of theology will be exciting. The shape on the cover already illuminates how I aim to do this. The shape portrays how I will focus in this thesis, and how I aim to resurface and broaden the topic again. Besides this portrayal of structure, the shape exists out of two arrows, meeting each other in the middle. The non-theological concept of entangled agency, meets ecological theology in the middle.

Entangled Agency as an Ecological Theological Hermeneutical Key

In this chapter I will introduce entangled agency as an ecological hermeneutical key. This is in light of environmental challenges and dealing with interrelations between humanity and the non-human creation. I will present a specific form of entangled agency as a concept and relate this to ecological theological hermeneutical developments recognised by David Horrell.¹ Central is the question: How can entangled agency be implemented within an ecological theological and hermeneutical framework?

Bringing entangled agency into the realm of theology fits with a contemporary development within the science and religion debate:² Namely the scientification of religion.³ Kocku von Stuckrad explains that this entails the merging of knowledge from a religious realm with a secular realm, more specifically, he sees how science is influencing religion, and vice versa, reconfiguring the secular and religious fields of discourse.⁴ This also entails the field of theology. David Horrell recognises the necessity to broaden the perspective of theology. Within ecological hermeneutics he sees the development of making interdisciplinary connections within the field of biblical studies as well as connections beyond biblical studies.⁵ Building upon these developments I see the relevance for theologians to activate their senses, and to be open to contemporary non-theological language that can enrich the language of theology.

The concept of entangled agency I will present is derived from Karen Barad and her work “*Meeting the Universe Halfway*”.⁶ When I first heard of entangled agency I was immediately intrigued. In light of the environmental challenges entangled agency helped to illuminate a new perspective on the relation between humanity and the non-human creation.

¹ D. G. Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics: Origins, Approaches, and Prospects,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Ecology*, ed. H. Marlow and M. Harris (Oxford: University Press, 2022).

² Science in this context means: beta-sciences such as biology, physics, chemistry. Perhaps the best way I can explain this distinction is to talk about Science and science. Humanities, social sciences, theology, and so forth all belong to Science with the capital S including science with a lower case with biology, physics and so forth. All are being part of a larger whole.

³ K. von Stuckrad, *The Scientification of Religion* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 180.

⁴ Von Stuckrad, *The Scientification of Religion*, 179-180.

⁵ D. G. Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 29.

⁶ K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke: University Press, 2007)

Entangled agency finds its roots within postmodern philosophy and quantum physics, bringing together these two realms of philosophy and quantum physics. With the scientification of religion, and the proposal of an interdisciplinary development within ecological hermeneutics, I want to introduce entangled agency within the ecological theological realm. Entangled agency is then such a concept beyond biblical studies.

Firstly, I will present the concept of entangled agency from the perspective of Karen Barad: What are the essentials of entangled agency? Secondly, I will present a paradigm of ecological hermeneutics. What are the essentials of ecological theological hermeneutics? Thirdly, I will link the concept of entangled agency with the developments within the paradigm of ecological theological hermeneutics: How do the essentials of entangled agency relate to developments within ecological theological hermeneutics?

1.1 Entangled Agency from an agential realist approach

Barad presents a specific form of entangled agency from an agential realist approach. This will be a fundamental building block for this thesis. Agential realism is a concept that recognises the entanglement of everything at the core of existence. Barad writes in her preface that entanglement is more than being intertwined with another. Barad states that entanglement has everything to do with lacking an independent, self-contained existence.⁷ To bring in the concept of entangled agency into the realm of theology, it is necessary to comprehend its ins and outs. To understand entangled agency from the perspective of Barad, it is important to know what its essentials are.

1.1.1 Debate

Barad proposes an alternative view on an anthropocentric relation between humanity and the universe. She concludes her book with this proposal, stating that:

Intra-acting responsibly as part of the world means taking account of the entangled phenomena that are intrinsic to the world's vitality and being responsive to the possibilities that might help us flourish. Meeting each moment, being alive to the possibilities of becoming, is an ethical call, an invitation that is written into the very matter of all being and becoming. We need to meet the universe halfway, to take responsibility for the role that we play in the world's differential becoming.⁸

⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, IX.

⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 396.

Meeting the universe halfway means for Barad a change of view on how everything in the universe is related. A change of view compared to what she calls representationalism. Barad states that:

Representationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent; in particular, that which is represented is held to be independent of all practices of representing. That is, there are assumed to be two distinct and independent kinds of entities — representations and entities to be represented.⁹

The problem for Barad with representationalism, the distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent, is how there is always a subject looking at an object. There is always something that is known and a knower, sometimes mediated by knowledge.¹⁰ For Barad it shows a power structure, with the consequence of a narrow minded vision on how the universe works, and how everything in it relates to each other. She says:

Representationalism is a practice of bracketing out the significance of practices; that is, representationalism marks a failure to take account of the practices through which representations are produced. Images or representations are not snapshots or depictions of what awaits us but rather condensations or traces of multiple practices of engagement.¹¹

Barad wants to bring in a different perspective over against representationalism, which is a power construct between the knower and the known. The knowledge presented by the knower is no more than a representation of the known, it is an incomplete image. “scientific practices do not reveal what is already there; rather what is disclosed.”¹² There is then, a large dependency on “the other” for a more complete image of the truth. Within theology the challenge then is to get as close as possible, in cooperation with the other, to the truth, the life and the way.

⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 46.

¹⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 46.

¹¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 53.

¹² Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 361.

1.1.2 Performativity & Agential Realism

Over against representationalism Barad brings a performative understanding, which brings me to the second point of unfolding entangled agency as a concept; performativity and agential realism. Performativity, for Barad, entails that knowing is not standing at a distance but means direct engagement with the world.¹³ Barad states: “The performative account insists on understanding thinking, observing, and theorising as practices of engagement with, and as part of, the world in which we have our being.”¹⁴ It is the performative account on which the theory of agential realism is built. Performativity then means to contest the movement of turning everything into words. It is “properly understood as a contestation of the unexamined habits of the mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve.”¹⁵ Barad tries to make her readers aware of the things that are already there, before we name them, before we even know they are there.

Barad argues that everything is ontologically connected. We should not speak about objects but about phenomena, which are the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting ‘agencies.’¹⁶ In other words, the starting point for Barad is that in the beginning there were phenomena. Within these phenomena relations originated and started to set boundaries and gain properties: “It is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determined and that particular concepts become meaningful.”¹⁷

Thus phenomena are reconfiguring constantly, within phenomena intra-actions take place, everything “comes to matter through the world's iterative intra-activity, its performativity.”¹⁸ Barad explains that an apparatus is needed to recognise phenomena, just as someone needs a microscope to see atoms. But just as a microscope is also made out of atoms, an apparatus is made out of phenomena. In the words of Barad:

Reading phenomena – the difference patterns through which space, time and matter come to be – including all the various apparatuses that help produce the illusion of the self-evidentiary

¹³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 49.

¹⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 133.

¹⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 133.

¹⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 139.

¹⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 139.

¹⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 152.

nature of ‘the given’ allows the frozen images to thaw out and the subject matter to come alive.¹⁹

Following up on the determination of reading phenomena, matter plays an important role in agential realism. Matter is substance in its intra-active becoming – not a thing, but a doing, a congealing agency.²⁰ Agential realism is about materiality, bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties. Bodies are material discursive phenomena.²¹ Barad sees the universe, with her theory of agential realism, as having originated from phenomena. Matter originates from phenomena when boundaries are set and properties are gained. This is a constant reconfiguration of reality. The origination from phenomena connects everything, makes everything entangled.

As a theologian it is the question if this also works within theology. The presumption then becomes that in theology the researched subject is also found in the researcher self and in the apparatus the researcher uses. For example then, someone needs the Bible to learn about God, but while learning about God, the reader of the Bible holds something that exists out of God while simultaneously a part of God already is within the reader. In §1.3.2, I will elaborate more on the role of the Bible and this exciting presumption.

1.1.3 Ethical Implications of Agential Realism

At this point I want to focus on the third and last step for understanding entangled agency. Working towards the end of her book, Barad discusses the ethics that come with the proposed alternative worldview. Based upon insights from Levinas she states that the otherness of the other is given in responsibility. This responsibility is not a commitment that a subject chooses but an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness.²² According to Barad, morality shows the same characteristics as phenomena, it was already there before it was determined by words. In her view, everything is entangled and therefore everything also has the capability to respond to the other. She states:

Responsibility is the ability to respond to the other, and this is not restricted to a human to human encounter when the very boundaries and constitution of the ‘human’ are continually

¹⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 360.

²⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 151.

²¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 153.

²² Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 391.

being reconfigured and ‘our’ role in these and other reconfiguring is precisely what ‘we’ have to face.²³

That the world is constantly reconfiguring, matter is constantly responding to other matter setting boundaries and gaining properties, draws a perspective of reality wherein agencies are entangled. The concept of entangled agency then calls for responsibility in gaining properties and setting out boundaries. Barad states that we are always already responsible for those with whom we are entangled, and that therefore ethics is about this responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part.²⁴

In light of environmental challenges, the message of Barad is to view our relation towards everything else as entangled, having influence on our own existence, as well as our existence has influence on the existence of everything else. With entangled agency in mind, the idea is to take accountability for our existence, in relation to the universe. Being part of this world, this view on the relation towards everything that is matter also appeals to how I from a theological perspective comprehend the relation between all that is matter.

I have set out the essentials for comprehending entangled agency. First, I presented the debate in which it takes part. Second, explained the role of performativity and agential realism as the foundation of entangled agency. Third, I summarised the proposed ethical implications derived from entangled agency as a concept. The debate between performativity and representationalism, the concept of agential realism wherein the universe is ontologically entangled, and the proposed ethics in line with Levinas, provide the stepping stones for a theological reflection on entangled agency within an ecological hermeneutical framework. In the following paragraph I will focus on the paradigm of ecological theological hermeneutics before bringing entangled agency into the realm of theology.

1.2 A paradigm of ecological theological hermeneutics

In this paragraph I present a paradigm of ecological theological hermeneutics. The central question is: What are essentials of ecological theological hermeneutics?

²³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 392.

²⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 393.

1.2.1 Development

To employ entangled agency as an ecological hermeneutical key, first I have to answer the question of what an ecological hermeneutics entails. Over the past two decades, ecological hermeneutics has developed in several ways. Horrell shared an overview of ecological hermeneutics and its development. He states that Ecological hermeneutics, first of all, is concerned with reading the Bible in the light of climate change and the environmental crises which challenge us in contemporary times.²⁵ This is important because nowadays it is not the question if humanity is at fault for environmental challenges, but how, and moreover, the question is how this can be changed so creation can be preserved.

In the 1960's and 1970's new questions and approaches originated in light of several environmental issues, where the negative impact of human activity on the natural world could no longer be denied.²⁶ In 1966, historian Lynn White Jr. gave a lecture on the historical roots of modern-day ecological problems. This lecture pointed towards the influence of religion, especially the influence of Christianity. White states that Christianity is “the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen”²⁷ and that “by destroying pagan animism Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.”²⁸ White suggests that what we do about ecology will depend on our ideas of the humanity-nature relationship. He states that more science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one.²⁹ He uses Saint Francis of Assisi as an inspiration who, according to him, has a unique view on nature: a panpsychism of all things animate and inanimate, designed for the glorification of their transcendent Creator, who in the ultimate gesture of cosmic humility, assumed flesh, lay helpless in a manger, and dying on a scaffold.³⁰

White's lecture raised critical questions about the creation stories, and humanity's impact on the earth because of their calling to have dominion over the earth in particular. These questions are one side of the ecological critiques on forms of Christianity. On the other side, questions of eschatology arise where earth is envisioned being destroyed.³¹ Horrell states that these questions give the impression that:

²⁵ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 19.

²⁶ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 20.

²⁷ L. White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science: New Series* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1205.

²⁸ White, “The Historical Roots,” 1205.

²⁹ White, “The Historical Roots,” 1206.

³⁰ White, “The Historical Roots,” 1207.

³¹ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 20.

[F]rom the beginning to the end of the Biblical story, it might seem to be the case that the Bible presents humans as rulers over creation, which will serve their needs until it is destroyed and replaced by a new heaven and a new earth.³²

This idea of the biblical story and the lecture of White in general are seen as a motivation for defending the Bible and its interpretations in light of environmental challenges. White and Barad both show the necessity to think about the relation between humanity and the non-human creation.

1.2.2 Different approaches to ecological hermeneutics

Horrell recognises three significant approaches within ecological hermeneutics trying to find ways to relate to environmental challenges.³³ The first approach is trying to (re)discover green theology and ethics within the Bible.³⁴ “The recovery approach represents a positive and appreciative view of the Bible, and seeks to show how the Bible, rightly interpreted, does contain an ecologically valuable message that can make a positive contribution to contemporary ecotheology and environmental ethics.”³⁵

Horrell puts us on the track of the theology of Hilary Marlow. She is a theologian who is significant within the recovery approach and her approach to the Bible will be significant for researching entangled agency in the Bible. Above reflecting on the relation between humanity and the non-human creation, she approaches the Bible searching for the relation between God, humanity and non-human creation. Horrell adds:

Marlow sketches the ways in which the Christian tradition has been largely anthropocentric in its concerns, and argues for a reconsideration of biblical texts in light of contemporary environmental challenges. While acknowledging these contemporary concerns as a primary stimulus for her work, Marlow focuses primarily on the (ancient) world of the text.³⁶

Marlow focuses on the use of natural language as she states:

In an age of ecological concern, it is interesting to explore how much language of the natural world suffuses the Bible, especially the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Of course, this is not

³² Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 20.

³³ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 20.

³⁴ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 21.

³⁵ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 28.

³⁶ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 23.

to suggest that contemporary environmental issues were a particular focus or interest of the ancient biblical authors. However, it does reflect an awareness of nature that includes geophysical phenomena, agricultural rhythms and seasons, and weather patterns and changes. Centuries of biblical interpretation have tended, for a variety of reasons, to relegate nature to the margins, regarding the natural world as the backdrop against which the human/divine story plays out.³⁷

Marlow uses an ecological triangle which visions God, humanity and the earth as interrelated. This triangle serves as a lens through which the biblical text is read.³⁸ Marlow emphasises that the text, as far as possible, needs to speak for itself. However, with asking specific questions it is possible “to identify ways in which the selected Old Testament texts exhibit interrelationship”³⁹ She uses three questions to identify interrelationships between God, humanity and the non-human creation.

1. What understanding of the non-human creation (whether cosmic or local) does the text present?
2. What assumptions are made about YHWH's relationship to the created world and how he acts within it?
3. What effect do the actions and choices of human beings have on the non-human creation and vice versa?⁴⁰

She adds a disclaimer to these questions:

It should be stressed that these questions form the background to the exegetical process. They are not a formal grid that will be applied over the texts—this would be little different from, say, using the eco-justice principles of the Earth Bible Project. Rather, it is important to let the texts speak for themselves, and in so doing to discover the differences in emphasis between books and indeed the tensions inherent within individual texts.⁴¹

Marlow is significant for my thesis when looking for the entanglement between all that is matter. On the one hand complementing the concern of anthropocentrism. On the other hand,

³⁷ H. Marlow, “Reading from the Ground Up: Nature in the Book of Isaiah”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Ecology*, ed. H. Marlow, and M. Harris (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2022), 123.

³⁸ H. Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford university press, 2009), 110.

³⁹ Marlow, *Biblical Prophets*, 110.

⁴⁰ Marlow, *Biblical Prophets*, 111.

⁴¹ Marlow, *Biblical Prophets*, 111.

by holding on to preserve the value of the biblical texts. Using her matrix will be valuable in researching Isaiah 11:1–10 in chapter two.

By focusing on the natural language, Marlow seeks the relation between God, humanity and the non-human. These characteristics are placed by Horrell in his first approach in ecological theological hermeneutics. With the focus on natural language Marlow is distancing herself from the Earth Bible Project. The Earth Bible project is exemplary for the second approach of Horrell. The second approach is determined by reading the Bible from the perspective of earth.⁴² This project seeks to read the Bible with the earth. In doing so, they hold on to six principles.

1. The Principle of Intrinsic Worth

The universe, Earth and all its components have intrinsic worth/ value.

2. The Principle of Interconnectedness

Earth is a community of interconnected living things that are mutually dependent on each other for life and survival.

3. The Principle of Voice

Earth is a subject capable of raising its voice in celebration and against injustice.

4. The Principle of Purpose

The universe, Earth and all its components, are part of a dynamic cosmic design within which each piece has a place in the overall goal of that design.

5. The Principle of Mutual Custodianship

Earth is a balanced and diverse domain where responsible custodians can function as partners, rather than rulers, to sustain a balanced and diverse Earth community.

6. The Principle of Resistance

Earth and its components not only differ from injustices at the hands of humans, but actively resist them in the struggle for justice.⁴³

These six principles help the researchers in this project to hold the focus on the voice of the earth within the biblical narrative, as is stated: “Rather than reflecting about the Earth as we analyse a text, we are seeking to reflect with Earth and see things from the perspective of Earth.”⁴⁴ About its approach the project says:

⁴² Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 23.

⁴³ C. Habel, *Readings From the Perspective of Earth: Earth Bible Volume One* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 24.

⁴⁴ Habel, *Readings From the Perspective of Earth*, 33-34.

Our approach in this series attempts to move beyond a focus on ecological themes to a process of listening to, and identifying with, Earth as a presence or voice in the text. Our task is to take up the cause of Earth and the non-human members of the Earth community by sensing their presence in the text—whether their presence is suppressed, oppressed or celebrated. We seek to move beyond identifying ecological themes in creation theology to identifying with Earth in its ecojustice struggle.⁴⁵

In this search of the project the earth is a subject and not an object. In other words the priority lies with the earth and eco-justice, as Horrell also signifies:

The Earth Bible approach places a commitment to ecojustice at the centre, and is ready both to resist and to recover biblical texts, which may be assessed as more ambivalent and mixed in terms of their green potential, depending on how far they represent the perspective and interest of Earth – which takes central stage as character with voice.⁴⁶

The Earth Bible project seems to tend towards an ecological hermeneutics of suspicion, where the voice of the earth needs to be read between the lines of the Bible and gain a similar amount of authority. Within the ecojustice principles God is not mentioned, which begs the question in how far the value of the biblical texts and doctrines can be preserved. In trying to preserve the value of the Biblical text, the approach of Marlow is in line with the notion of entangled agency as a researchable subject that can also be researched in the Bible. This is over and against the principles of the Earth Bible Project where the power structure is merely shifted from the voice of humanity towards the voice of the earth .

The third approach in Horrells work, is working towards a critical and theological hermeneutic:

[It] seeks to practise a kind of theological hermeneutic that locates the ecological reading of the Bible within the Christian tradition, while at the same time deriving new but critical readings of the biblical texts, constructed in the light of contemporary ecological challenges, to reconfigure and develop the Christian tradition in an ecological direction.⁴⁷

This will enhance the notion of entangled agency as a method for ethical research. To employ entangled agency as a method the work of Conradie is significant. Ernst Conradie has written several works on establishing critical and theological ecological hermeneutics. Therefore, he

⁴⁵ Habel, *Readings From the Perspective of Earth*, 35.

⁴⁶ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics,” 28.

⁴⁷ Horrell, “Ecological Hermeneutics”, 28.

is a representative of what Horrell sees as the third approach within ecological hermeneutics. When it comes to hermeneutics in general, Conradie states that “it is not possible to jump from the biblical text to a specific problem in contemporary context,” at least not with a doctrinal key.⁴⁸ This means that biblical texts are always read through a specific lens. Every theological movement and theologian has its own hermeneutics because of its own doctrinal keys.⁴⁹ When it comes to ecological theological hermeneutics a hermeneutic of suspicion can be recognised, in line with liberation theology, and feminist theology. Ecological hermeneutics are then ideological-critical of anthropocentric distortions, and a reconstruction of the stories of the victim(s) of these distortions is sought.⁵⁰

Conradie recognises this form of ecological hermeneutics within the Earth Bible Project, a project where the Bible is read from the perspective of the earth. In this project, the Bible is read with a doctrinal key based upon intrinsic worth, interconnectedness, voice, purpose, mutual custodianship, and resistance.⁵¹ This can be a way of reading the Bible, where there is a normative priority employed to judge the validity of the text and contemporary culture.⁵² In other words new dogma’s are created on the basis of ecological beliefs. Conradie sees the need for an ecological hermeneutics especially in light of the environmental challenges today and the assumed influence of Christianity, however, he pleads for an hermeneutics of suspicion towards the hermeneutics of suspicion that is recognised within the approach of the Earth Bible project. Within ecological hermeneutics Conradie pleads for the reintegration of the themes of creation, sin, redemption and eschatological consummation.⁵³ These themes can be recognised in the doctrinal constructs he proposes when he emphasises the importance of doctrinal constructs.

Such doctrinal constructs play a crucial role in interpretation. They have a triple function: they provide a strategy to identify both the meaning of the contemporary context and of the biblical texts. They therefore enable an interpreter also to establish a link between text and contemporary context. Doctrinal constructs are not only employed to find similarities but to construct similarities, to make things similar, if necessary.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ E.M. Conradie, “The Road Towards an Ecological Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics”, *Scriptura* 93 (2006): 307.

⁴⁹ Conradie, “The Road Towards”, 308.

⁵⁰ Conradie, “The Road Towards”, 309.

⁵¹ Conradie, “The Road Towards”, 310.

⁵² Conradie, “The Road Towards”, 310.

⁵³ Conradie, “The Road Towards”, 312.

⁵⁴ E.M. Conradie, “What on Earth is an Ecological hermeneutics? Some broad parameters”, in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. D. Horrell, C. Hunt, C. Southgate and F. Stavropoulou (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2010), 301.

Because of the importance of these doctrines Conradie describes three essential doctrines. “First, many have interpreted the message of salvation in terms of victory over the forces of evil, destruction and death.”⁵⁵ “Secondly, the message of salvation may be understood in terms of the healing of various broken relationships.”⁵⁶ “Thirdly, one may mention various concepts focusing on the moral influence of the biblical narrative inspiring to do good.”⁵⁷ These essential constructs are complemented with other important constructs in his eyes. Conradie states: “It seems to me that we need to search for relatively adequate constructs in order to do justice both to the rich plurality within the biblical texts and the contemporary demands of ecojustice and sustainability.” For him these constructs could be: the liberation of creation, emphasis on wisdom, the metaphor of ‘the whole household of God.’

With these constructs the eschatological consummation, redemption and sin are covered under the twofold notion of salvation. Creation and can be stationed under the liberation of creation and the whole household of God. These constructs may serve well when interpreting the Bible, but Conradie also recognises that none of these will be fully satisfactory. Thus he proposes:

It is unlikely that any one doctrinal construct will ever be satisfactory. What is required here is perhaps not a single category but a cluster of such constructs, a box full of tools that may be used wherever helpful. What we need is a reconstituted ‘horizon’ that will enable us to relate with each other a) the biblical roots of Christianity, b) the subsequent history of the Christian tradition (in its rich complexity and its distortions), c) the content and significance of the Christian faith, d) a set of ethical categories and e) the increasingly dramatic challenges of environmental degradation.⁵⁸

Conradie wants ecological biblical hermeneutics to go hand in hand with an ecological reformulation of Christian doctrine. This cannot be narrowly focused on a revisiting of creation theology but calls for a review of all aspects of the Christian faith.⁵⁹ In other words, Conradie is in his ecological hermeneutics being suspicious of the hermeneutics of suspicion. To this he adds the proposal of rethinking doctrinal keys influencing all aspects of faith. Linking Conradie's rethinking of doctrinal constructs with Barad's notion of phenomena

⁵⁵ Conradie, “What on Earth” 302.

⁵⁶ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 302.

⁵⁷ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 303.

⁵⁸ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 311.

⁵⁹ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 311.

reconfiguring constantly, I then propose to let response-ability occur between the biblical texts, tradition in the form of doctrinal constructs and our contemporary context as a theological reconfiguring.

Both Conradie and Marlow are searching for a way to preserve the value of the Biblical text. While the Earth Bible Project is not weary of resisting or restoring text, in line with a hermeneutics of suspicion. Marlow searches for a way to preserve the value of the Biblical text with her ecological triangle and questions that can be asked to the biblical text, even if there is a negative answer on these questions. Conradie focuses on doctrines and proposes a reconfiguration of these doctrines. With the ecological triangle of interrelation between God, Humanity and the earth, as well as the proposal for a renewed doctrinal keys, Marlow and Conradie are valuable interlocutors in my attempt to employ entangled agency as hermeneutical key.

1.3 Building Entangled Agency as Ecological Theological Hermeneutical Key

In this paragraph I focus on the implementation of entangled agency from an agential realist approach into ecological theological hermeneutics. First, I will present how theology can be approached from an agential realist perspective. Secondly, I will build upon the presentation of the agential realist approach and implement this within an ecological theological hermeneutics.

1.3.1 Bringing Entangled Agency into the realm of theology

Barad herself seeks to employ her theory of agential realism within the realm of theology by focussing on the works of philosopher Walter Benjamin. In this paragraph it is not my aim to fully comprehend the philosophy of Benjamin, my aim is to comprehend the way Barad connects with theology. In her attempt to find a connection with theology she follows Benjamin in his development of a historical materialism with *Jetztzeit* as key insight.⁶⁰

In Benjamin's historical materialism, *Jetztzeit* or “now-time” is an alternative for “now” as an infinite small slice of time.⁶¹ *Jetztzeit* is a special moment full of energy in time where time is forced to follow another path. Barad explains the vision of Benjamin: “He is

⁶⁰ K. Barad, “What Flashes Up: Theological-Political-Scientific Fragments”, in *Entangled Worlds: Religion, Science, and New Materialisms*, ed. C. Keller and M. Rubenstein (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017), 21.

⁶¹ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 25.

calling for a disruption of the ongoing violence of the state. The messianic is therefore not figured in human form, . . . , but rather the messianic is a break in the continuum of history.”⁶² Based upon the quantum physics of his time, Benjamin presents historical materialism as history that is doing something in making time materialise in such a way that the oppressed past has a chance to fight.⁶³ In other words, time is not a linear path that just goes its way and there is no way of changing the path of history. Rather, with different views on history, the outcome of time can change. Here historical materialism and agential realism seem to complement each other in the way Barad comprehends both. Benjamin presents his historical materialism with the concept of crystallisation and Barad explains:

Imagine taking hold of a crystal and shining light through it. You would see the ray of light being dispersed by the crystal structure. The light rays bend when hitting the atoms of the crystal, and the deflected rays overlap with one another producing diffraction patterns.⁶⁴

Barad explains furthermore, how electron diffraction works where electrons can be in a superposition of states, meaning that electrons can be present in multiple places at the same time. At the same time she explains that the presence of electrons are not only place-bound but also time-bound. Diffraction of electrons can also happen in time, meaning that electrons can be in a superposition at multiple times.⁶⁵ This idea, she then recognises with *Jetztzeit*.

Jetztzeit is a crystallization of times, of multiple temporalities, blasted out of the continuum of history: a superstition of times—moments from the past—existing in the thick-now of the present moment. And in fact, according to quantum physics the past is always open and can be reconfigured, but never in a way that loses track of (i.e., erases the trace of) all that has happened (all the various reconfiguring).⁶⁶

Barad reads Benjamin trying to grasp his intentions and recognises how Benjamin works towards developing a philosophy of intervention in time: a reconfiguration of time itself. This is a wish to stop the time, look at time, where it comes from, and where it is heading. And if time is heading into the ‘wrong’ direction, for Benjamin a relevant question in the beginning of the twentieth century, looking for ways to make time move a different way. Benjamin uses

⁶² Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 25.

⁶³ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 29.

⁶⁴ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 32.

⁶⁵ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 33.

⁶⁶ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 33.

the concept of arresting time, a dialectical standstill where a crystalline constellation forms.⁶⁷

Barad explains further:

According to Benjamin, an image is something that flashes up: “Image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation.” Hence Benjamin’s lightning flash is not between spatial points but across times.⁶⁸

Barad recognises various aspects of quantum physics within the work of Benjamin and mentions how lightning, constellations, and crystals play a crucial role. She summarises how crystallisation is the stopping of time, a break in the continuum of time. And in this moment, everything that has happened, moves through this moment. The past is diffracted through/in *Jetztzeit*. This moment has such an impact, the energy that comes free in this moment means a reconfiguring of time. This moment is seen as a messianic cessation, history blasted out of a linear narrative of happenings.⁶⁹

At this point, theology, science and politics, the ideas of quantum physics, and the need for a messianic moment in a time that changes the course of history come together during the roaring start of the twentieth century. Moreover, historical materialism, according to Benjamin, and agential realism come together with the concept of diffraction. When it comes to time-being as something that materialises, Barad adds nuance. Time-being in her eyes is: “something that materialises, as a specifically political and material practice, an iterative practice, a chance for intervention that is attuned to the possibilities for liberation, for justice in the now of the present moment.”⁷⁰

By focusing on the above mentioned aspects of the philosophy of Benjamin, Barad sees an opportunity to bring her agential realism into the realm of theology. Diffraction can be a key method for showing how reality is entangled, but moreover how reading sources and relating them to specific aspects of history can help a constellation to emerge, a point in time where history can shine through the crystal and shows the multiple ways it can proceed. This is a valuable insight when bringing text, tradition and contemporary context together from an eco theological perspective.

When Barad uses agential realism on the philosophy of Benjamin, her sources are the works of Benjamin, the interpretation of Benjamin by philosopher Judith Butler, the

⁶⁷ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 34.

⁶⁸ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 34.

⁶⁹ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 37.

⁷⁰ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 38.

Kabbalah, and the Targum. Her theological route is via Jewish traditions. It is via this route she concludes that: “the messianic can be understood as a constitutive alterity, a flashing up of other time-beings with/in and through matter in its very constitution.”⁷¹

Together with her observation that the messianic can not be a figure, but rather that it is a flashing up of other time-beings with/in and through matter causes a christological problem. Following this train of thought means that in the end the messianic is a denial of the unique work of Christ. Moreover, the messianic is part of the immanent world when the time-being is something that materialises as practice with a chance of liberation. This is in line with matter originating from phenomena intra-acting and developing through space and time.

Barad then has a specific interpretation of Benjamin, and this can be a door into the realm of theology, but with her own conclusion of the role of the messianic as not being a figure, questions arise in light of a christological messianic event. Moreover, this leaves the question open what the role of the transcendent could be within her view. Namely, the messianic is presented as a moment in space and time, emphasising mostly the immanent character of the messianic.

It is important to know which parameters are used for the diffraction process. Barad uses parameters that lead to a conclusion where the messianic cannot be a figure. This result then invites us to respond with a result where the messianic is indeed a figure; the shoot of Ishay. But before this response can be made, I first take a step back and focus more on the use of these parameters instead of the content of these parameters.

Focussing on the use of agential realism in science and the method of diffraction in agential realism, I seek possibilities for different parameters. Agential realism is proposed as an alternative approach to science, in their book “*Dialogues on Agential Realism: Engaging in Worldings through Research Practice*,”⁷² Malou Juelskær, Helle Plauborg and Stine Adrian research the influence of agential realism within different scientific fields. In the final chapter of their book they aim to “contribute to an ongoing discussion about developing and qualifying research practices that take up alternative approaches to the representational types of thinking that still often regulate much qualitative research methodology.”⁷³ Building on the

⁷¹ Barad, “What Flashes Up,” 73.

⁷² M. Juelskær, H. Plauborg and S.W. Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism: Engaging in Worldings through Research Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).

⁷³ Juelskær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 8.

work of Barad, they challenge objectivity. Objectivity is then described as being accountable and responsible for what is real.⁷⁴ And what is real, is enacted through intra-action.⁷⁵

When doing research, an agential realist approach means to be aware of specific connections while remembering that these connections are ‘quantum entanglements’⁷⁶ Being aware of the specific connections within the larger web of entanglements, means that other connections in the research are excluded, meaning that doing research comes with responsibility.⁷⁷ In agential realist practice responsibility becomes response-ability, meaning that research is about sensing responses.⁷⁸ The research must then be designed in a way that the explored phenomenon is given the opportunity to act back and provide a response to the research question.⁷⁹ Response-ability is consequently about us also being responsive and responsible for the fact that we inherit all possible pasts and futures.⁸⁰

In other words, all that ever was, and all that ever will be, is because of all that ever happened and will happen. Every choice that is made has influenced its outcome, and will influence the outcome. Reality then is a sum of all the acts by all entangled agencies. Scientific practices are then meaning-making practices that require accountability to what is brought into existence.⁸¹ There is a responsibility for the ongoing fabric of the world with special attention paid to engaging in better world-makings or more just worldings.⁸² Worldings in this sense are the multiple worlds of matter that are entangled with each other. If I am doing research, employing agential realism means keeping in mind the response-ability of what is studied, next to the consequences of this research and how to handle it ethically.

I aim to present a broader perspective on the use of entangled agency and the possibilities for different parameters than Barad herself used. Taking a step forward again, means then that there are two levels to be reckoned with. Parallel with Barad, if entangled agency from an agential realist approach is to be employed in interpreting the Bible, the first level is the ethical level. Agential realism explains how everything is entangled and that bodies are discursive, phenomena influencing each other, which means that with every choice made in research, another choice is excluded. Agential realism raises awareness of this phenomenon. The ethical level points towards the entanglement between all that is matter,

⁷⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe halfway*, 304.

⁷⁵ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 143.

⁷⁶ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 144.

⁷⁷ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 144.

⁷⁸ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 144.

⁷⁹ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 145.

⁸⁰ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 145.

⁸¹ Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 145.

⁸² Juelskjær, Plauborg and Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism*, 146.

and how there is an obligation to act morally in relation to all that is matter. Focused on research then, this entanglement between all that is matter can be illuminated and disclosed.

The second level is response-ability, best seen within the use of diffraction.

Diffraction then serves as a method where matter is reacting on matter. Dr. Richard Dunk uses the example of waves to enhance the concept of diffraction within agential realism. He explains it like waves colliding with wavebreakers in the sea, steering the waves in different ways. Similarly he says that this is also the reason why sound can be heard within different rooms, bumping into walls, redirecting the waves.⁸³ The wavebreakers respond to the waves while the waves respond to the wavebreakers. This is envisioned as a grating. Dunk explains:

Waves are passed through many uniform slits of equal spacing. Such uniform slits are called a diffraction grating, and the resulting diffraction pattern is much clearer and distinct than a two-slit pattern. This allows for detailed insight to be gained both about the waves themselves and the grating through which they are passing.⁸⁴

I have built further on the concept of entangled agency as presented within the theory of agential realism; and how this theory can be employed within science, specifically within theology. Namely as a subject of research, and as a method of diffraction. I have set out how agential realism already plays a role within science studies and theology. Working towards implementing this within ecological theological hermeneutics, the next step is to determine the role of the Bible.

1.3.2 The role of the Bible

The Bible can serve as an apparatus for researching the relation between God, humanity and the non-human creation. But simultaneously the Bible is a crucial part of the relation between God, humanity and the non-human creation. The Bible has authority in the determination of this relation. Therefore, it is significant to preserve the value of the text. This is challenging if we follow the line of thought from Barad where the role of the transcendent seems marginal when all that is matter is ontologically entangled. Together with the implication of the messianic as an event in space and time, rather than a figure, entangled agency seems to be an

⁸³ R.A. Dunk, "Diffracting the Quantum and the Social: Meeting the Universe Halfway in Social Science," *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies*, 20, no.3 (2020): 230.

⁸⁴ Dunk, "Diffracting the Quantum," 230.

approach that is over against a transcendent christological perspective where God incarnates, and predominantly immanent.

Theologically God is an agent in reality as well, who self became human, who breaks into the immanent and works through humanity and the non-human creation to establish the possibility of a return to God. In that sense there has to be a notion of the transcendent and the immanent when talking about reality. The method and ideas of intra-connectedness can enhance an ecological theological hermeneutical framework. But to employ entangled agency as ecological theological hermeneutical key attention is needed to the tension between the transcendent and immanent.

1.3.2.1 Transcendence and immanence

To deal with this tension I want to propose that the Bible can be a bridge between the transcendent and immanent. Being aware of my own response-ability, using the Bible as a source opens up multiple discussions, which are too large for this thesis. Therefore, I show a possibility of using the Bible as a source, as a bridge between the transcendent and immanent, knowing I also exclude other ways of using the Bible.

With the Bible as a bridge between the transcendent and immanent I mean on the one hand that the Bible exists in the world being written by humans and added together during a long process and with much discussion. On the other hand, the Bible speaks of the relation between God, who also exists outside this world, and these humans who have written the Bible and added it together. The third and foremost aspect of the Bible is that it is [known as] the word of God himself. Through the Bible it is possible to interact with God and through the Bible it is possible to read how God interacted with humans. In other words, explained by theologians M. Barnard, J. Cilliers, C. Wepener:

In the Bible the ‘Word of God’ is permanently on the move, because the ‘Word of God’, by a miracle, includes responses to that word. Lament and despair, hope and praise, prayer and thanksgiving, singing and sighing, cursing and blessing are handed down in the Bible, which according to the beliefs of the church, is the ‘Word of God’.⁸⁵

It is with these basic ideas I want to argue that there is a transcendent and immanent aspect of the Bible, which are interwoven. In other words:

⁸⁵ M. Barnard, J. Cilliers, C. Wepener, *Worship in the Network Culture: Liturgical Ritual Studies. Fields and Methods, Concepts and Metaphors* (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 95.

Word in worship is the celebrated and commemorated ‘word of God’ that happens and comes into being in the double act of hearing (reading aloud, explaining, proclaiming) and responding (lamenting, hoping, praying, singing, moving, acting). These twin acts cannot be strictly distinguished, but are osmotically linked.⁸⁶

The double act of hearing points to the Bible as the ‘Word of God’, and a word of humans. Linked to the employment of entangled agency as ecological theological hermeneutical key which on itself is predominantly immanent, the use of the Bible as a researchable object, transforms the whole as an entangled transcendent-immanent practice. The Bible is an apparatus.

1.3.2.2 The role of the prophetic

Within the Bible, as a researchable object of which its use is transformed as an entangled transcendent-immanent practice, the genre of prophetic texts plays a crucial role in the change of attitude for its readers. As Walter Brueggemann explains, the role of prophets is twofold. On the one hand in dismantling the established order and on the other hand in forming a new community. He states:

Moses intended the dismantling of the oppressive empire of Pharaoh; and on the other hand, he intended the formation of a new community focused on the religion of God’s freedom and the politics of justice and compassion. The dismantling begins in the groans and complaints of his people; the energizing begins in the doxologies of the new community.⁸⁷

With explaining the role of the prophet, Brueggemann argues how this is manifested in Christ.

Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet, and more than a prophet, I argue, practiced in most radical form the main elements of prophetic ministry and imagination. On the one hand, he practiced criticism of the deathly world around him. The dismantling was fully wrought in his crucifixion, in which he himself embodied the thing dismantled. On the other hand, he practiced the energizing of the new future given by God. This energizing was fully manifested in his resurrection, in which he embodied the new future given by God.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Barnard, *Worship in the Network Culture*, 95.

⁸⁷ W. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 115.

⁸⁸ Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 116.

Interestingly, the notion of the prophetic as dismantling the established order and forming a new community can be linked with Barad's notion of the messianic. Both can be seen as matter in space and time which motivate and stimulate change. Barad writes from a different perspective on the relation between humanity and the non-human. Employing entangled agency as an ecological theological hermeneutic key is then a transcendent-immanent practice. Ecological theological hermeneutics aims to theologise in light of environmental challenges. Employing entangled agency as an ecological theological hermeneutical key on a prophetic text means to consider that the text is written to motivate change. On the one hand from the ecological perspective, on the other hand from the prophetic perspective. With this idea I can work further towards employing entangled agency researching Isaiah 11:1–10.

1.3.3 Evaluation: Entangled agency with and in the Bible

In line with the idea of Barad that everything is matter, and all matter is entangled is significant for the perspective of Marlow on the relation between God, humanity and earth. Entangled agency from the agential realist approach is then part of the research subject. Moreover, entangled agency could serve as an extra doctrine within the doctrinal key.

In line with Conradie, the theory of diffraction is significant. The image of the rocks influencing the direction of the waves is helpful. In this image the doctrinal keys influence the interpretation of a biblical text. Using the concept of entangled agency together with Conradie's ecological theological hermeneutics means defining the doctrinal keys he proposes. These exist of the doctrines of sin, creation, redemption and eschatological consummation. Reading the Bible then means to let the text flow, and letting the text respond to these doctrines, changing the outcome of both meanings in space and time. Entangled agency from the agential realist approach is then part of the method.

With Barad, Marlow and Conradie I present entangled agency from an agential realist approach as an approach that works on multiple levels. On the one hand, entangled agency from an agential realist approach can be the object of research. This means that I can research the entanglement of matter in the Bible. Researching this in the Bible means that it is a transcendent-immanent practice, especially when the notion of the messianic and prophetic comes into play. The messianic and prophetic characteristics of texts can point into the direction of the needed change of perspective when it comes to environmental challenges today.

On the other hand, there is a meta-level. With the ethical implications linked to agential realism, the researcher has to be aware that every decision that is made, also means another decision might be excluded. This is what can be seen within the theory of diffraction. Bringing different aspects into the equation causes different outcomes. The apparatus through which the light beam is seen, changes its path and pattern. The waves that move around bump into the rocks, which causes them to change direction and to change their pattern. Different matter is responding to each other, influencing the outcome of their being space and time. The role for the theologian then, is to bring different aspects into the equation. In the next chapter I will bring in Isaiah 11:1–10.

Entangled Agency in Isaiah 11: 1–10

In this chapter I will put entangled agency from the agential realist approach to the test by researching entangled agency in Isaiah 11: 1–10. I will focus on the question: how are God, humanity and the non-human creation entangled within Isaiah 11:1–10? The prophetic text of Isaiah 11: 1–10 is a text which provides a voice that stimulates a change of view for the relation between humanity and the non-human creation, and theology with an eye for environmental challenges in mind. With environmental challenges at the back of our mind, the relation between humanity and the non-human creation is significant in Isaiah. Marlow observes how the book of Isaiah is full of references to nature.

Even a quick read of the book of Isaiah shows that references to the natural world suffuse the text. Indeed, there is hardly a chapter that does not refer to the physical world in some way or another—perhaps not unexpected for Second Isaiah with its emphasis on God as creator, but rather more surprising for other parts of Isaiah. Poems, proverbs, similes, and extended metaphors depicting nature proliferate. Such abundance attests the importance of the natural world, created by Israel’s God YHWH, to the authors and redactors of Isaiah, whether as part of their lived reality or as a powerful means of communicating their message.⁸⁹

Isaiah 11:1–10 in particular, shows the interest between the physical world including the non-human creation. In this text I will research the entanglement between the different agents. This way I will build towards an interpretation which after that can go through the process of diffraction. Like waves in the sea, or light through a hole, there is a starting point from which response-ability can emerge.

2.1 The source

I start with a translation. In the case of Isaiah 11: 1–10 I will present a translation mostly based upon the Masoretic text from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Marlow, “Reading from the Ground Up,” 123.

⁹⁰ W. Rudolph and G. E Weil, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Ed. by K. Elliger. 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997).

2.1.1 Translation Isaiah 11: 1–10

*1: And there shall come forth a shoot from the trunk of Ishay
and a branch from the root shall bear fruit.*

*2: And upon him shall rest the spirit of Adonay:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of council and power, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Adonay.*

*3: And his delight is in the fear of Adonay.^a
And not in the sight of his eyes shall he judge
and not by the hearing of his ears shall he decide,*

*4: but he shall judge the lowly with righteousness
and he shall decide with uprightness over the poor of the earth
and he shall strike the earth with the stick of his mouth and with the breath of his lips
shall he kill the wicked.*

*5: And it shall be that the belt of his waist is righteousness
and the belt of his loins is faithfulness.*

*6: And a wolf shall dwell with a lamb
and the leopard shall lie down with a young goat
and the calf and a young lion shall graze together^b
and the little child leading them.*

*7: And the cow and a bear shall graze.
Their younglings lie together
and the lion, as the ox, shall eat straw.*

*8: And a suckling delights himself by the hole of an asp
and by the hole of the viper the weaned child stretched forth his hand*

*9: And they do no evil
and they do not destroy the whole of my holy mountain.*

*Because full shall be the earth with the knowledge of Adonay as the waters fill up the
sea*

*10: And on that day, the root of Ishay stands as a token to the peoples
for the nations shall seek him, and His resting place shall be glory*

2.1.2 Notes

In this part I want to point out two larger differences and difficulties in relation to other ancient written sources of the Isaiah 11 pericope. These differences and difficulties have a significant influence on the outcome of the presented text.

Firstly, subscript a, the third verse starts with the delight that is in the fear of God. It is debated if this part should be seen as a dittography. Meaning that it is plausible that the writer added this line, using almost the same words as the end of verse two. J. Roberts states that the meaning of this phrase is not transparent and has similarities with the preceding verse. However, he states also that this would be an early corruption because the phrase is also part of 1QisaA.⁹¹ The plausibility of the phrase being an early corruption implies also that the use of the phrase was already common. There is no evidence of the phrase being corrected over and against an earlier source. It is for this reason that I do not see the necessity for leaving the phrase out of my translation.

Secondly, subscript b, with the same reasoning, attributing value to the relevance of Qumran texts as texts that show a glimpse of the reading and hearing culture of Biblical texts in ancient times, verse 6 seems odd with a discontinuity in its metric. Instead of proceeding with mentioning two animals and connecting this with a verb, the fatling is a third animal and the verb is missing. In 1QIsa^a 10 the discontinuity is absent.⁹² There it says ימרו instead of וּמְרִיאָ which is derived from: מְרִיעָה. This means a pasture, a haunt of wild animals which is from the root רעה meaning: to graze. Different from the masoretic text, using “to graze” the metric of two animals and a verb is restored. The use of this phrase within the ancient text of Qumran shows the necessity to value this reading above the masoretic text. On the basis of de grammatically argument of following the poetic metric and the evidence of the early use in the Qumran scroll, I say that the phrase in verse 6 then would translate into: “and the calf and a young lion pasture together.”

There are several minor differences between textual variants of Isaiah 11: 1–10.⁹³ However, the above-mentioned differences both influence the text as a whole. With these notes in mind, the text can now be researched with entangled agency from an agential realist approach by focusing on entangled agency in the text.

⁹¹ J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary, Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 177-178.

⁹² E. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 353.

⁹³ D.W. Perry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants* (Leiding: Brill, 2019), 107-111.

2.2 Entangled Agency In Isaiah 11: 1–10

Isaiah 11: 1–10 presents a future vision where a shoot from the trunk of Ishay shall come forth. A descendant of Ishay is announced. In the first half of this pericope, this descendant is described having several characteristics. A branch of the root shall bear fruit, the spirit of Adonay shall rest on him, his delight is in the fear of God. And it also becomes clear that this descendant will come to judge. The descendant shall strike the earth and kill the wicked. On him he carries the belts of faithfulness and righteousness. The first part mentions the consequences of the arrival of the descendant of Ishay for the poor and the wicked.

The second part switches to a larger view, as if a camera zooms out. The future vision is not just for the poor and the wicked humans. The wolf and the lamb will dwell in this new situation. Predators and prey will live in peace. The world that is envisioned is a peaceful world where animals and humans live harmoniously. The situation is portrayed calmly so that even a child could lead the wolf, the leopard, and the young lion. The vulnerable suckling can play at the hole of an asp. In the final verses, the author explains why and how this could be. On the holy mountain of God, there will be no evil or destruction because of the knowledge of God. This knowledge of God was already given upon the descendant of Ishay, but will spread out across the world, while the descendant of Ishay shall be as a token to the world.

To research entangled agency within this pericope, two elements are significant. First is the notion of entanglement. How are the different agents within this text entangled? And when they are entangled, how do they influence each other and act as agents, in their entangled development through space and time? Focusing on the entanglement between God, humanity and the non-human creation is then a fundamental point of attention. Incorporating the focus on the relationality with God makes the focus theological, meaning that other entanglements are excluded, but not less important. The ecological triangle Marlow uses already focuses on this threefold relationality.

This triangular model seeks to identify ways in which the selected Old Testament texts exhibit interrelationship—between God and the earth as well as between God and human beings, and also between humanity and the non-human creation. By undertaking a close reading of the texts through the lens of this relational matrix we will uncover hitherto neglected ideas and motifs—the unnoticed involvement of the non-human creation in the story of Israel.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Marlow, *Biblical Prophets*, 110.

With this matrix in mind, Marlow presents three questions to work with, see §1.2.2, to eventually present the relationality between God, humanity and the non-human creation. With these three questions I will focus on Isaiah 11: 1–10. The first two questions of Marlow are valuable for the determination of entanglement. Marlow’s third question is valuable for pointing out where agency happens.

2.2.1 The non-human creation presented

Marlow’s first question is: *What understanding of the non-human creation (whether cosmic or local) does the text present?*

The pericope is full of references to nature, starting with the first verse. In this verse a future vision is presented using natural language for a future figure: The shoot from the trunk which shall bear fruit. The explanation of this shoot in Isaiah is stated as an hypocatastasis, comparing new life from a felled tree to the descendant of Ishay who will possess the spirit of Adonay.⁹⁵ Moreover, the figure of speech follows upon the last verses of chapter 10. In Isaiah 11:1 the same field of imagery is used as in Isaiah 10:33-34. The new growth, the shoot from the stump of Ishay, arises out of the destruction of a forest that was described in 10: 33-34.⁹⁶ The hypocatastasis is then a figure of speech where natural language lets the announcement of the descendant of Ishay speak to the imagination. The figure of speech in natural language already shows a glimpse of the connection of the author with the natural world or as Marlow puts it: “First Isaiah is more adept at using details from nature to inform and shape its message, and both human life and the character and actions of YHWH are explained by close observation of the natural world.”⁹⁷

Where the author in the first five verses focuses on the descendant of Ishay, from verse six and onwards the author broadens the horizon. Between the vv. 1–5 and 6–10 there is a sharp distinction of content, there is a move from hope of a king who will administer justice to an utopian vision.⁹⁸ Within this utopian vision the relation between humanity and nature becomes significant.

⁹⁵ W.A. van Gemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: volume 2* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 106.

⁹⁶ H. G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 6–12: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary: International Critical Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 641.

⁹⁷ Marlow, “Reading from the Ground Up,” 128.

⁹⁸ Williamson, *Isaiah*, 631.

With a classic set of images the prophet portrays the kind of security and safety which will result in the rule of the Messiah. The most helpless and innocent will be at ease with those who were formerly the most rapacious and violent.⁹⁹

It is from this point on that we do not deal with hypocatastasis anymore. The wolf and the lamb, as well as the leopard and the young goat live together without experiencing any danger. Like in a herd, the young calf and the lion are led by a small child. Here a resemblance with David can be imagined.¹⁰⁰ This resemblance with David resonates with the stump of Ishay from the first five verses. The future perspective portrays an image where animals known as predators start eating like cattle. The writer sees bears grazing and lions eating straw like an ox. The natural world has a prominent place within the pericope, shedding a different light on the role of nature. Marlow states:

[N]ot all the references to the natural world in First Isaiah are concerned with human wickedness or divine judgement, particularly in the later poetic sections. Notably in chapter 11 and frequently from chapter 29 onward, various hints at the renewal and restoration of the natural world stand alongside messages of hope for the children of Israel.¹⁰¹

The descendant of Ishay in the first verses will have a large influence on the outcome of the future. This was previously portrayed as a figure of speech, with the destroyed woods and new life sprouting from these woods. In the second part this is made concrete and a restored creation is envisioned. J.W. Olley adds meaning to this transformation:

For Isaiah the distinctive core of the future is not temple worship but an Earth community where all live in mutuality, where all is made right and there is no harming or destroying. 'Harmful' animals are not banished, rather they share in the transformation with humans (principles of interconnectedness and purpose). All participate in the 'knowledge of YHWH' on the 'holy mountain'.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 283.

¹⁰⁰ Watts, *Isaiah*, 173.

¹⁰¹ Marlow, "Reading from the Ground Up," 128.

¹⁰² J.W. Olley, "The Wolf, the Lamb, and a Little Child: Transforming the Diverse Earth Community in Isaiah", in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, ed. N.C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 227.

The non-human creation in vv. 6–9 is presented as transformed. Through the work of the descendant of Ishay, the environment will change into an environment where no evil will be done. The transformation of the presented non-human creation is then connected with a sense of ethics. R.E. Clements recognises how the peaceful world has ethical implications for the world that is not nearly as peaceful as envisioned within the text:

[A]n important legacy of the promise of Isa. 11 :6-9 towards a Christian doctrine of creation is its highlighting of the complexity of the ethic of aggression in its biblical context. Biblical perceptions of the natural world accept that aggression may serve goals that are ultimately beneficial to the needs of specific animals, among whom the lion is the chief example.¹⁰³

The author of Isaiah sees bears grazing and lions eating straw like oxen. Not only animals live together peacefully within this future perspective. The writer portrays the venomous viper and the viper species, the asp, being around a suckling, without harming. Where in verses 6–8 the non-human creation is concretely presented, the future perspective portrays an image where animals known as predators start eating like cattle.

At the end of the pericope the figure of speech returns when the knowledge of God will fill the earth like the water fills the sea. In verse 9 the author writes that no evil is done and nothing will be destroyed on the mountain. The knowledge of Adonay returns, as it first rested on the shoot of the stump of Ishay through the spirit of Adonay, now the knowledge of Adonay fills the world as if it is water in the sea. The final verse of the pericope refers back to v.1 mentioning the day of the root of Ishay. The writer adds a final characteristic to the root of Ishay; it shall be a token for the people. Then the writer concludes his future perspective with how it will be on that day. Namely, a place of rest and glory.

I argue that the non-human creation is presented in two ways. The text starts with a figure of speech full of references to the non-human world which follows up on preceding chapters. The use of the shoot, and the stump, show how the non-human creation is a vital part in the world of experience of the author of the text and its hearers and should be understood this way. Secondly, the use of natural language leads to a new future image where the figure of speech becomes literally. The world will be restored in such a way that humanity and the non-human creation will live peacefully together. This portrait, if we follow Olley first points to a universal salvation, a restoration of relationships. Both human and

¹⁰³ R.E. Clements, “The Wolf Shall Live With The Lamb: Reading Isaiah 11:6-9 Today”, in *New Heaven and New Earth Prophecy and the Millenium*, ed. P.J. Harland and C.T.R. Hayward (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 99.

non-human agents take part in this universal salvation. This then implies, following Clements, a certain set of ethical principles of how the relationship between all that is created should be; without aggression. Understanding this presentation of the non-human creation in Isaiah 11: 1–10, however, cannot be done without understanding its relation to God if notions of salvation and ethics come into play. Therefore, the next step follows almost naturally which is answering the second question that Marlow uses.

2.2.2 God's relationship to creation

The second question is: *What assumptions are made about God's relationship to the created world and how he acts within it?*

Within Isaiah 11: 1–10 the agency of God is prominent. On the rubble of the destruction that is portrayed in the preceding chapter, Isa 10:32–34, a new shoot will rise. And the spirit of God will be upon the descendant of Ishay. With God placing this spirit upon the descendant, there is debate if this could be the Holy Spirit, or perhaps another spirit.

With reading Isaiah 11:1–10 through a New Testament lens I could argue that indeed the Holy Spirit is at work. Jesus then is the ultimate prophet if I follow Brueggemann, that the crucifixion was the dismantling of the natural order, and the resurrection is the embodiment of the new future given by God.¹⁰⁴ The New Testament interpretation of Leighton and Gregerman strengthens this image.

In Rom 15:12, Paul invokes Isa 11:10 (LXX) to express the dream of universal salvation: "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." Obviously, Paul maintains that the ideal ruler anticipated by Isaiah is none other than Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵

The event of Jesus his baptism then becomes significant. The spirit there came upon the descendant of David. Jesus who saw the spirit come down upon him as a dove. The understanding of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is a much later development, the link between Isaiah 11:1–10, the Holy Spirit and Jesus is another research project.

However, for this thesis, Isaiah does not use a specific concept of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah does say that God places the spirit of wisdom and understanding, council and power,

¹⁰⁴ Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 116.

¹⁰⁵ C. Leighton, A. Gregerman, "Isaiah 11:1–11", *Interpretation* 64, no. 3 (2010), 285.

and the knowledge of the fear of God upon this descendent of Ishay. What is interesting then is that the placing of the spirit implies a desire of God for revelation.¹⁰⁶ The spirit in Isaiah 11:1–10 then, is something that God distributes, more than that the spirit is an agent. God distributes the spirit through the descendant of Ishay who shall be as a king.

The key movement of ideas is that of desiring and delighting in God's wisdom with the central focus on doing God's ways. The Shoot from Judah's root will use Divine revelation and perceptions to carry out Divine restoration and establish peace through "powerful persuasion."¹⁰⁷

The relation between God and creation is from this point of view merely established through the relation between God and humanity. Leighton and Gregerman recognise how humanity is deployed in the work of God bringing the revelation.

The messianic portrait that Isaiah provides in the opening sentences of ch. 11 highlights a sociopolitical king in the line of David (from "the stock of Jesse"), whose reign will anchor God's will in Jerusalem and extend outward to the rest of the creation.¹⁰⁸

In addition to Leighton and Gregerman, Marlowe focuses on how this will of God is carried out.

Isaiah 11,2a-3a tells the reader that a descendant of Judah will come who will powerfully and passionately and persuasively preach or proclaim, as well as produce, the "fear" of God, which according to the verses that follow (3b-9) will principally and eventually bring about judgment on the wicked, justice for the poor, and perfect peace, because God's knowledge will be universal.¹⁰⁹

Thus an important aspect of this will of God in Jerusalem and the rest of creation, is that creation has knowledge and fear of God. The shoot of Ishay is provided with this knowledge. The knowledge of God is seen as a marker of a pious person.¹¹⁰ Knowing and fearing God is

¹⁰⁶ C.W. Marlowe, "The Spirit Chiasm in Isaiah 11,2a-3a", *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 28, no. 1 (2014): 50.

¹⁰⁷ Marlowe, "The Spirit Chiasm in Isaiah," 53.

¹⁰⁸ C. Leighton, A. Gregerman, "Isaiah 11:1–11," 284.

¹⁰⁹ Marlowe, "The Spirit Chiasm in Isaiah," 55.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 179.

a crucial part of the relation between God and creation in Isaiah 11: 1–10 which will not only occur between God and humanity but the whole earth will know God.

When determining the relation between God and creation several things light up. Firstly, the announcement of a kinglike figure, a descendant of Ishay who is deployed to play a crucial part in the will of God for creation. This goes together with the notion of judgement, for the enemy as well as God's beloved people as verse 4 portrays. Interpreting the text brings up the possibility of God first bringing judgement, decline of the situation before improving it with the establishment of a just ruler from the root of Ishay. There is a notion of God who can create, but also destroy and restore. The restoration which can be recognised in Isaiah is an unique occurrence, where the whole natural order is reversed.¹¹¹

The spirit of knowledge and fear of God is first given to the root of Ishay, and later for the whole of creation in the verses 2 and 9. Together with the judgement and righteousness of the shoot of the stump of Isay, this has consequences for the relation between all living beings. This entails an eschatological portrayal of the world where no evil will be done by either human or non-human entities. It is God who stands at the beginning and the end of this process of creation, judgement and restoration. Until there is peace on His holy mountain. It is the question if this means that humanity and the non-human creation are passive agents which brings me to the third question of Marlow.

2.2.3 Actions and Choices of humanity and the non-human creation

The third question of Marlow is: *What effect do the actions and choices of human beings have on the non-human creation and vice versa?*

Isaiah 11: 1–10 narrates about a figure, a descendant of Ishay whose action will affect the total order of the earth, including the hostile relations between predators and prey, humans and animals. These events follow upon the destruction of the forest in chapter 10. But this is not a final judgement. The descendant of Ishay shall also judge. After mentioning the judgement of the descendant of Isay in v. 4, the shoot of Isay is portrayed as being righteous and upright in his judgement. Furthermore the writer foresees that he shall destroy evil. He shall carry a belt that is righteousness and faithfulness. And this has consequences for the relation between all living creatures.¹¹² In the end they will all live in a peaceful environment where no evil is done. As Leighton and Gregerman observe:

¹¹¹ Marlow, *Reading from the ground up*, 132.

¹¹² Watts, *Isaiah*, 172.

This radical realignment constitutes the core of Isaiah's vision. The establishment of this new age is anchored in a particular place of revived security and peace, making possible the realization of God's intentions for the creation. As God's agent, the ideal king will inaugurate a peaceable kingdom: "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid" ¹¹³

Thus humanity is employed, and is God's agent in a development towards a peaceful holy mountain. It is this descendant of Ishay who will call judgement upon the poor, and the meek. From a liberation theology perspective I argue that this is the case for humanity as well as for the non-human creation. Especially in contemporary times, the poor and the meek can be recognised in the marginalised position of the non-human creation. H. Ramantswana recognises the importance to keep in mind the marginalised voices in the text:

In the Isaianic vision, the restoration of creation is not solely anthropocentric; rather, it encompasses the whole community of created beings, which are all inextricably connected in the complex web of life.¹¹⁴

I argue that the descendant of Ishay has a significant role in the change of the relationship between the human and non-human creation before and after this judgement. Because the poor and the meek of v.4 also entail non-human creation, and if judgement is then also upon the predators and prey, Humanity and the non-human creation will affect each other after the judgement differently than before judgement, according to v.9 in doing no evil. The portrayal of doing no evil then resembled in the preceding verses 6-8. Isaiah then portrays a different world in line with the interpretation of Ramantswana:

The marginalised voices in the book of Isaiah imagined that another world is possible even in the midst of their oppression under imperial domination, which threatened not only their livelihoods, but also wildlife.¹¹⁵

Taking everything together, my vision on Isaiah starts with the notion that God is a prominent agent within Isaiah 11: 1–10, standing at the beginning and the end. The shoot of Ishay is a

¹¹³ C. Leighton, A. Gregerman, "Isaiah 11:1–11," 284.

¹¹⁴ H. Ramantswana, "Not Free While Nature Remains Colonised: A Decolonial Reading of Isaiah 11:6-9," *Old Testament Essays* 28, no. 3 (2015): 828.

¹¹⁵ H. Ramantswana, "Not Free," 828.

prominent agent of God in the first half, vv.1–5. Implied then, is the agency of the animals before judgement, being part of the poor and the meek, the marginalised. The animals before judgement were indeed the predators and prey. After judgement, predator, prey, suckling and small child acting in such a way that they do no evil but lie together, graze together, and even the lion eats straw. The role of God in this acting of all agents is crucial. Entangled agency between humanity and the nonhuman could not be possible without the acting of God.

Barad, as I have grasped in §1.1.2, sees the universe as originated from phenomena. Matter originates from phenomena when boundaries are set and properties are gained. This is a constant reconfiguration of reality. The origination from phenomena connects everything, makes everything entangled. When God is at the start and the beginning, but also acting through time and space, influencing the outcome of the future reality, which can be recognised in Isaiah 11: 1–10, then the entangled agency from an agential realist approach can be a non-theological language to help understand Isaiah 11: 1–10.

God, with the spirit he puts upon the descendant of Ishay, is acting and reconfiguring reality. This reality is one where aggression between all creation asks for a messianic event, in line with Benjamin and Barad, a *Jetztzeit* that is judgement for the poor and meek that changes the direction of time and space towards a better time. The descendant of Ishay acts as the judge, manifesting this *Jetztzeit* in relation to the whole of creation. This better time in Isaiah 11: 1–10 is the moment of peace between predator and prey, poor, and meek on the holy mountain of God that is Glory.

2.3 Evaluation: Entangled Agency in Isaiah 11: 1–10

What then can be concluded based upon Isaiah 11: 1–10 is that entangled agency is present in the text and can be presented as: humanity and the non-human creation both being entangled and subject to creation, judgement and restoration of God where God is the crucial connecting factor for entanglement. When I read the presence of entangled agency in Isaiah, in a prophetic text, in the Bible, this helps to relate on a theological level to the idea that all creation matters. Moreover, the stimulating aspects that prophetic texts carry could not only motivate to change our perspective on the relation between God, humanity and the non-human creation, but even change our behaviour towards all that is matter. In Isaiah 11:1–10 this behaviour is linked to the pre-judgement period in light of the post-judgement period. The aim in the world should be a life of no aggression, applied to all that is matter.

In Marlow's words: "The biblical worldview centers around God's intentions, actions, and interactions with the world, thus is primarily theocentric, rather than ecocentric or anthropocentric."¹¹⁶ As discussed earlier, again the aspects of the transcendent and immanent cause a tension between theology and the entangled agency from an agential realist approach. Following Marlow this means that:

The biblical authors seem to appreciate that the natural world is not just the backdrop to the divine-human story. These texts remind us that actions have consequences and that we neglect the ecological interconnections of the world at our peril. Their perspective invites us to consider seriously the importance of the natural world, both physically and spiritually and to re-evaluate our own anthropocentric perspectives and actions.¹¹⁷

The notion of the appreciation for nature of biblical authors is in line with the presence of entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10. There is a relation between God, humanity and the non-human creation. In the following chapter I will put entangled agency as a method of diffraction to the test.

¹¹⁶ Marlow, *Reading from the ground up*, 134.

¹¹⁷ Marlow, *Reading from the ground up*, 134.

Entangled Agency with Isaiah 11: 1–10

In this chapter I will focus on the second aspect of entangled agency and Isaiah. I will focus on the question: how does entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10 respond to the doctrinal constructs of salvation, reconciliation and the moral influences of biblical texts? In chapter two I have focused on entangled agency in Isaiah. Where entangled agency was the researchable subject in the text. But, as we have seen in §1.3.1 and §1.3.3 entangled agency can be valuable on two levels. The second level is entangled agency as method, with an emphasis on diffraction. To comprehend entangled agency fully in relation to Isaiah 11: 1–10 both aspects need to be illuminated. Within agential realism the theory of diffraction is a key concept for understanding the entanglement of matter. I present diffraction as an answer to the search of Conradie who is seeking a box full of tools.

What is required here is perhaps not a single category but a cluster of such constructs, a box full of tools that may be used wherever helpful. What we need is a reconstituted ‘horizon’ that will enable us to relate with each other a) the biblical roots of Christianity, b) the subsequent history of the Christian tradition (in its rich complexity and its distortions), c) the content and significance of the Christian faith, d) a set of ethical categories and e) the increasingly dramatic challenges of environmental degradation.¹¹⁸

With entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10 I have provided a source that can move through the process of diffraction. With Dunk in mind, I will let the text bump into different doctrines. Namely, the doctrines Conradie mentioned, see §1.2.2, which are: the message of salvation, the restoration of a broken relationships and the moral influence of the text.

3.1 Doctrinal constructs

With entangled agency from an agential realist approach, in chapter two, I tried to approach the core of Isaiah 11:1–10. In the text, the different agents, God, humanity and non-human creation are entangled through the acting of God who places his spirit upon the descendant of Ishay. The prophetic perspective portrays an image where humanity and non-human creation

¹¹⁸ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 311.

are both part of life without evil on the holy mountain and are both transformed through judgement.

As stated, researching entangled agency in Isaiah was part one of two applications of entangled agency. I will now proceed with the second application of entangled agency. This entails Entangled agency with Isaiah. In other words I will let the interpretation of Isaiah from chapter two respond to matter that influences the text. As seen in §1.2.1 it is not possible to jump from a contemporary context to the text without doctrinal keys.

Response-ability with Isaiah 11:1–10 then means that different doctrinal keys and the interpretation of the Isaiah text will respond to and with each other.

Response-ability as we have seen, is all about two or more entities responding to each other, influencing each other on the path in time and space they are going. Based upon the process of diffraction, a source subject is responding to different obstacles. The analogy of the wave and the wavebreakers is used to visualise this process. Using response-ability for researching a biblical text, the text then is the starting-point, the source subject, that is responding to the wavebreakers. The wavebreakers influence the course of the text.

With the hermeneutics of Conradie these wavebreakers are the doctrinal constructs. With response-ability then, there is a mutual response. On the one hand the text, in this thesis Isaiah 11:1–10, responds to the doctrinal constructs. On the other hand, reading Isaiah 11:1–10 also causes for the doctrinal constructs to respond or even change. In 2.3 a reading of Isaiah 11:1–10 is presented where entangled agency was the focus. It is this reading that will serve as the starting point for a diffraction process.

Because entangled agency in this chapter is employed as a method, this means that I will let the interpretation respond to doctrinal constructs. Therefore, the academic ethical implications from §1.3.1 must be kept in mind. When employing entangled agency as a method, one must be aware of the web of entanglements that is implied. Therefore, every choice that is made, also excludes other choices. It is crucial to design research where the researched phenomenon is able to react to the different choices. In the case of Isaiah 11:1–10 these choices are the doctrines of salvation, reconciliation, and moral influence.

Conradie proposes to rethink doctrinal constructs and presenting a toolbox that may be used wherever helpful.¹¹⁹ In this thesis it is not my aim to present fully renewed theologies of Salvation, reconciliation, or moral influence of the text. However, it is valuable as a thought experiment to let these doctrinal constructs respond with the entangled agency

¹¹⁹ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 311.

interpretation of Isaiah. Therefore, I stay close to the thoughts of Conradie self about these doctrines.

3.1.1 Doctrine of Salvation

About salvation Conradie first states that:

[M]any have interpreted the message of salvation in terms of victory over the forces of evil, destruction and death. Here a number of metaphors are employed to indicate how a particular threat is overcome: liberation from political or economic oppression, release from captivity (being held ransom), overcoming a military threat, healing from life-threatening diseases, feeding in a context of famine, exorcism from evil spirits and ultimately victory over death itself. All these concepts suggest the need for victory over some or other threat, typically based on the resurrection hope. In each case such victory may retrospectively be attributed to God.¹²⁰

Conradie himself examines the concept of salvation in relation to creation by researching Dutch theologians A.A. Van Ruler and A. Kuyper in light of ecological theology. His concerns are:

For current discourse in the context of Christian ecotheology, the relationship between creation and salvation is of crucial significance given the long-standing tendency in several confessional traditions to portray the Christian gospel as narrowly focused on the salvation of (some) human beings. At worst, this has been described as salvation from the earth. In response, virtually all contributions to ecotheology have maintained that it is the earth itself that has to be saved (the salvation of the earth).¹²¹

In his attempt to see the relevance of Kuyper, Conradie sees Van Ruler in line with Kuyper as promising theology for ecotheology and rethinking doctrines of salvation and redemption in contemporary time. Or as Conradie states it: “Van Ruler’s work in this regard, partly on the basis of the track pathed by Kuyper and Bavinck, is particularly promising.”¹²² Conradie

¹²⁰ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 302.

¹²¹ E.M. Conradie, “Introduction” in *Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper’s Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology*, ed. E.M. Conradie (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 5.

¹²² E.M. Conradie, “Conclusion: Kuyper’s Significance for Ecotheology and the Need for Further Reflection on Creation and Salvation” in *Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper’s Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology*, ed. E.M. Conradie (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 137.

recognises the difficulties when it comes to the tension between creation and salvation. He states:

how difficult it is for reformed theology to maintain the fruitful tension between faith in God as Creator and as Redeemer, to occupy the middle ground between salvation as elevation and as new creation. The key here is the term “recreation” (herscheping) which suggests that the eschatological completion of God’s acts of salvation is indeed creative and aimed at the healing of God’s own creation.¹²³

In his comprehension of the relation between creation and salvation, Conradie ends up with the analogy of juggling. He sees doing theology, and working with biblical texts in relation to doctrines as an act of paying attention to different themes at different times. He explains:

One may start a story anywhere—at the end, in the middle or at its chronological beginning. Perhaps theological reflection on the narrative of God’s work may be described as an act of juggling where attention to any one theme has to be balanced by attention to the others. To subsume any one theme under any other would be to catch that one and to let all the others fall. Only such an act of juggling can prevent the systematic distortion of the narrative. As Barth recognised more clearly than most others, such juggling cannot be neatly systematised. It has to be done continuously in new contexts, every morning anew.¹²⁴

With this insight salvation and redemption in light of creation theology and environmental challenges, the interpretation is always dependent on the context, and can be changed by the needs of this particular context. However, there is also a notion of an eschatological salvation. This can be called a transcendent notion that comes with the salvation of earthly proportions.

3.1.2 Doctrine of Reconciliation

The twofold perspective on salvation from §3.1.1 sheds a light on Conradie’s vision of reconciliation about which he states:

[T]he message of salvation may be understood in terms of the healing of various broken relationships. The root of such alienation may be attributed to a distorted relationship with God. Here another cluster of concepts is used to indicate how such healing is possible,

¹²³ E.M. Conradie, “Conclusion: Kuyper,” 141.

¹²⁴ E.M. Conradie, “Conclusion: Kuyper,” 144.

including ‘satisfaction’ and ‘penal substitution’, but also sacrifices, confession of guilt, forgiveness and reconciliation. The focus is typically on the cost of reconciliation and therefore on the symbol of the cross.¹²⁵

On further notice, Conradie unfolds the paradigm of interpretations of reconciliation as he recognises that:

The problem underlying conceptual clarification is that the term “reconciliation” is used in quite different ways in society. It is commonly used with respect to personal relationships that have become distorted in marriage or family life, or between neighbours, colleagues or members of an organisation.¹²⁶

Conradie sees that in a Christian context, reconciliation is used in three ways. Firstly, this entails the reconciliation with God after alienation occurred because of sin which distorted the relationship between God and humanity. Secondly, this entails reconciliation by being one with Christ and the body of Christ as church. Thirdly, this entails reconciliation through the holy spirit in church and society.¹²⁷ Reconciliation then can be approached in two ways, Conradie says: “the ministry of reconciliation in church and society only becomes possible on this basis of reconciliation in Christ.”¹²⁸ and therefore “the deepest roots of social conflict lie in human alienation from God.”¹²⁹ On the other hand, Conradie states that from a second perspective:

[R]econciliation between two individuals is only possible if the whole of society is reconciled with itself. For that, an ultimate perspective is required: ultimately, reconciliation between two individuals is only possible through reconciliation with God.¹³⁰

And: “Reconciliation has to be understood in the context of both God’s work of creation and of salvation”¹³¹ The differences between these approaches lie in the focus. On the one hand, the focus lies on the relation between God and the individual and therefore not on the

¹²⁵ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 302-303.

¹²⁶ E.M. Conradie, “Reconciliation as One Guiding Vision For South Africa?: Conceptual Analysis and Theological Reflection” in *Reconciliation a Guiding Vision for South Africa?*, ed. E.M. Conradie (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2017), 17.

¹²⁷ Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 18.

¹²⁸ Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 18.

¹²⁹ Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 19.

¹³⁰ Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 20.

¹³¹ Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 20.

reconciliation between people. On the other hand, the focus lies on the relation between God and the whole of creation which then implies the reconciliation between others as well, through reconciliation with God. When it comes to reconciliation, Conradie proposes to let the different approaches interplay where the conclusion of one approach can serve as the starting point for the other.¹³²

3.1.3 Doctrine of the Moral Influence of the Biblical Text

The third doctrinal construct Conradie is proposing for rethinking and reintegration is the doctrine of the moral influence of the biblical texts.

Thirdly, one may mention various concepts focusing on the moral influence of the biblical narrative. They provide us with the inspiration, the energy to do good, to transform society through appropriate policies towards some or other moral vision, perhaps towards ‘justice, peace and the integrity of creation’. Several biblical symbols may play roles here, including God’s Law, the teachings of Jesus, his incarnation, life and ministry and the instructions in the Pauline corpus of letters.¹³³

The work of Conradie, implicitly, is full of links with the moral influences of biblical texts, and Christianity as such. When it comes to reconciliation, for example in the context of conflict in South Africa, Conradie sees that an ultimate reconciliation is merely a dream of an utopia in a broken world. However, Conradie states:

Yet this reality should not allow anyone to domesticate the vision of ultimate reconciliation. It is precisely this vision, juxtaposed with current realities, that provides the source of hope, inspiration and dedication to engage in the ongoing process of reconciliation.¹³⁴

Here a theology of reconciliation can serve as a motivation to keep pursuing the idea of an alternate reality where people are reconciled. Implicitly, the Bible then is a source for the specific theologies about reconciliation, and therefore has a moral influence on the behaviour of people, stimulating them to in the end reconcile with each other. The same counts for Conradie’s work in ecological hermeneutics. Where he states that: “Ecological theology from

¹³² Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 21.

¹³³ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 303.

¹³⁴ Conradie, “Reconciliation,” 78.

within a Christian context may be understood as an attempt to retrieve the ecological wisdom embedded in the Christian tradition as a response to environmental threats and injustices.”¹³⁵

Within ecological theology and hermeneutics it is then the question how the Bible can provide insights in acting in a declining environment. Within this search Conradie is looking for a toolbox, different tools to comprehend a text. This could be different doctrines or different methods. Conradie sees the importance of juggling, of paying attention to different themes in relation to different contexts in relation to the Bible.

When a story can start everywhere, and the theological reflection on the narrative of God is described as juggling, then entangled agency as a method of diffraction can add a different perspective on this act of juggling. Within the act of juggling, the interpreter plays a significant role, as the one who holds all the balls. Different from the act of juggling, where themes or doctrines are held once at a time and are moved around, diffraction opens the possibility to let the different themes and doctrines respond to each other simultaneously. The image of a pinball machine can help to understand the difference. The interpreter then starts the process of diffraction.

However, It is the interpreter who also designs the research environment. The interpreter influences the outcome by making the choices. The interpreter chooses which parameters will be the obstacles and what will be the ball that is shot into the diffraction process. With the role of the interpreter the notion of performativity of §1.1.2 resurfaces: “The performative account insists on understanding thinking, observing, and theorising as practices of engagement with, and as part of, the world in which we have our being.”¹³⁶ By making specific choices a specific reality is forged, while simultaneously there is a reality outside this reality. Using entangled agency then, is being aware that even the design of a specific reality will influence the outside reality, because the interpreter itself is part of the web of entanglements in which the choices are made.

Employed on the process I myself started, this means that the biblical text is set into a relation with a contextual theme. As I have done in chapter two, this theme is the relationality between God, humanity and the nonhuman. Different doctrines will shed a light upon the biblical text, and on other doctrines. As a pinball wizard, I will shoot the Isaiah 11:1–10 ball, into a designed reality based upon the doctrines proposed by Conradie.

¹³⁵ Conradie, “What on Earth,” 295.

¹³⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 133.

3.2 Diffraction

In this section I will use entangled agency as diffraction of the text. I will start with the interpretation of the Isaiah text through the lens of entangled agency and the ecological triangle. I have stated that in Isaiah 11:1–10 entangled agency is present and can be presented as: humanity and the non-human creation both being entangled and subject to creation, judgement and restoration of God. God then will be present placing his spirit upon a messianic figure. This messianic figure will be central in the messianic event which will lead to the human and non-human creation ultimately live in peace as both matter on their own but entangled as both created and in relation restored with God in His resting place that is Glory.

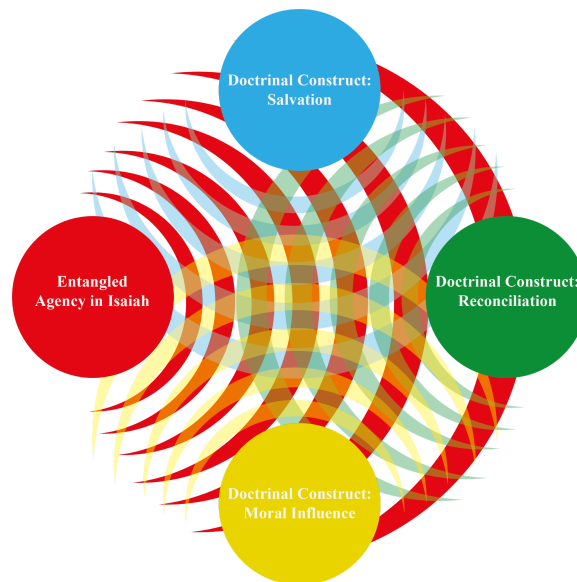


Figure 1: Visualisation of the process of diffraction with a Biblical text

The diffraction of the text through the doctrinal constructs of salvation, reconciliation, and moral influence, proposed by Conradie, invites to rethink entangled agency in Isaiah 11 in response-ability with these doctrinal constructs where each doctrinal construct adds colour to the interpretation. Fig.1 shows how the text bumps into the different doctrinal constructs. Each doctrinal construct responds with its own colour. The colours of each doctrinal construct are less ‘strong’. The transparency allows the colours to mix. Blue and red become purple, red and yellow become orange, red and green become brown. The reaction of the doctrinal constructs on Isaiah influences the interpretation of the text from chapter two and vice versa. The doctrinal constructs reaction on Isaiah also influence each other in the process.

3.2.1 How do the text and the doctrine of salvation react to each other?

Conradie recognises that the doctrine of salvation holds a victory over the forces of evil, destruction and death. Moreover, in line with Van Ruler he recognises that salvation is about elevation and recreation. Isaiah 11:1–10 as we have seen in §2.2 holds several aspects which align with these characteristics of the doctrine of salvation according to Conradie.

The victory over destruction is immediately a theme within the first verse read in the larger context of the destruction of the forest in the preceding chapter. The victory over destruction means then that even if the forest is destroyed, from the rubble there will grow new life. And as the text proceeds, this new life will change the complete order of creation. This new life, the descendant of Ishay, will change the order of creation, through another aspect of salvation; victory over the forces of evil. V.4 undoubtedly, touches upon this aspect when the earth shall be struck with the stick of his mouth and the breath of his lips; within this act, the wicked are killed.

The insight of salvation as recreation, relating to Conradie's comprehension of Van Ruler, seems a key theme within Isaiah 11:1–10. First there is judgement, where the wicked will be killed, but after the judgement the order of creation is turned around. The vv. 6–8 portray a utopian image where predators and prey live peacefully together, the same counts for the vulnerable and powerful agents in the text. This might even point to a salvation from death, however, this is merely implicit. The portrayed image reminds of an image of paradise before the fall where no evil was done. Creation seems portrayed as renewed in Isaiah 11:1-10, with the future image of His holy mountain of Glory where again, no evil will be done.

The doctrine of salvation through the victory over destruction and evil, and death aligns with the text. However, it is the question if these can be applied to the entanglement between humanity and the non-human creation. The doctrine of salvation through recreation, in the perspective, is significant because it includes humanity and the non-human agents both as part of creation. Moreover, salvation can stand on its own, as Conradie stated, where reconciliation is an important part of the doctrine of salvation. This brings me to the second bump; the text and reconciliation, but also reconciliation and salvation.

3.2.2 How do the text and the doctrine of reconciliation react to each other?

Conradie stated that the message of salvation is linked with the healing of broken relationships. The relationships are broken because of sin. In this sense he notices how the

focus on reconciliation is often on the ways to reach reconciliation. He mentions satisfaction, penal substitution, sacrifice, and therefore a dynamics of guilt and forgiveness.

With these notions, the debated verse 3 becomes relevant, where the delight of the descendant of Ishay, is in the fear of the lord. As stated in §2.2, this is linked with the will of God to have the knowledge of God being on the descendant of Ishay in v.2, but moreover spread out over the whole world in v.9. This way satisfaction comes into play, satisfaction in the sense that the descendant of Ishay knows God, and satisfaction for God in the knowing of God by the descendant of Ishay. This is a mutual knowing where God made the first move by placing the spirit of knowledge upon the descendant of Ishay.

The knowing of God is crucial in the reconciliation between God and humanity. This notion of reconciliation is related to the reconciliation with God from the perspective of Conradie. The alienation between God and humanity had to be restored which is portrayed through a powerful persuasion, a spreading of the knowledge of God in Isaiah 11:1-10. This is only one side of reconciliation where the focus lies more or less on the reconciliation between the individuals and God. On the other hand, the powerful persuasion also carries the will of God for a divine restoration for the whole world. The portrayal of an environment where no evil is done after the work of God through the descendant of Ishay, shows how reconciliation between two individuals, prey and predator, powerful and vulnerable, can be established after reconciliation with God. Showing precisely the interplay between the focus on the individual, and the focus on the whole of creation Conradie proposes.

Conradie, however, recognises other approaches to reconciliation that are related to the New Testament notions of the Holy Spirit and the Cross. Reconciliation through the spirit and towards society can still be implied with the notion of God's spirit of knowledge in v.2 and the notion of the knowledge of God filling the earth in v.9. However, it is debated if this is the Holy Spirit, as known from a trinitarian perspective. The approach of reconciliation by oneness with Christ and his Church is particularly difficult if one is focusing only on the vv. 1–10. The text itself does not mention Christ as messiah. However, the apostle Paul links this specific text with Christ as the descendant of Ishay. With a christological interpretation of Isaiah 11:1–10 the other aspects of reconciliation, penal substitution, sacrifice, guilt and forgiveness, change the perspective of the text. The work of God through the descendant of Ishay is expanded in light of the cross. How the doctrine of reconciliation works in relation to Christ, humanity and the non-human creation, and Isaiah 11:1–10 is a different research project. For this thesis it fits with reconciliation as God's work of salvation. Where Christ can be seen as a crucial part in the development towards the holy mountain of God which is glory.

The doctrine of reconciliation bumping into the doctrine of salvation and entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10 invites us to rethink the relation between God and humanity. On the one hand this means a restoration of individual relationships. On the other hand this means a restoration of relationships between others, especially with Isaiah 11:1–10 in mind, the restoration of the relationships between humanity and the non-human creation, between predator and prey, between the powerful and the vulnerable. Without forgetting that this is through the work of God, via the descendant of Ishay.

3.2.3 How do the text and the doctrine of moral influence react to each other?

The third doctrine is the moral influence of the biblical text. As Conradie stated, this has everything to do with the biblical text that motivates to do good. As we have seen with the prophetic value of the text in §1.3.2.2, Isaiah as prophetic text can serve as a text that dismantles the established order and plays a role in the forming of a new community. The messianic and prophetic character of the text in line with Barad are ingredients that can stimulate change when it comes to environmental challenges today.

In §2.2.3 the acts and choices portrayed in Isaiah 11:1–10 are examined. God is in this text the prominent agent who stands at the beginning and the end. The shoot of Ishay is an agent of God, being part of God's plan to spread the knowledge of God. Sharing the knowledge of God, as we have seen, is crucial for reconciliation with God, which is then an important factor for salvation.

When it comes to moral influence, the notion of judgement in v.4 is significant, implying that there is good and evil behaviour, together with v.9 where it explicitly says that there will be no more evil. However, it is unclear from the text what this precisely means. The vv. 6–8 point in a direction of moral behaviour. The behaviour of predator and prey are turned around within the utopian peaceful image that is portrayed. The implication then, is that before the judgement, evil has everything to do with living in disharmony and aggression with each other, predator and prey, powerful and vulnerable, human and non-human creation. If there is a moral influence of the text then I would say that this is found within the behaviour after judgement. In line with Conradie, this would mean that the moral influence of a biblical text works by envisioning a juxtaposed reality that provides hope and inspiration to do good and already try to show something from this utopian vision here and now.

When it comes to the entanglement of all that is matter, this would imply that the future of humanity and the non-human creation are bound to each other, which can be seen in

the utopian vision of Isaiah 11:1–10. It implies that there needs to be a sense of care towards creation as a whole. Remembering the words of Barad, we are always already responsible for those with whom we are entangled, and that therefore ethics is about this responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part.¹³⁷ Being part of the whole, a new community is then established of the reconciled human and the non-human agents, sharing in the salvation of God for his creation; starting with the reconciliation between humanity and God. In short, reconciliation is a renewed sense of entanglement between God, humanity and the non-human creation.

3.3 Entangled Agency and Isaiah 11:1–10

In the final part of this chapter I will evaluate the examination of Isaiah 11:1–10 with entangled agency as an ecological theological hermeneutical key. I have read Isaiah 11:1–10 using the concept entangled agency on two levels. The first level was entangled agency as a researchable subject in the text. In chapter two I argued how entangled agency is present in the text. I found that God plays a crucial role in the entanglement between the human and the non-human creation. God then stands at the beginning and the end. God placing its spirit upon the descendant of Ishay is an important act for establishing the entanglement between humanity and the non-human creation.

In this chapter I related this interpretation of Isaiah 11:1–10 in a process of diffraction to specific doctrinal constructs, proposed by Conradie. With these doctrinal constructs I found that the relation with God plays a crucial role for salvation and reconciliation by restoring the relation between predator and prey, vulnerable and powerful, in an eschatological peaceful environment. Moreover, this insight is valuable for rethinking our own relation towards God, the other, and all that is matter. I researched entangled agency in the text and recognised the interconnectedness with creation around us. I then used entangled agency to research the entanglement between different doctrines. The idea of interconnectedness I found in Isaiah 11:1–10 does not stand on its own. It is entangled with the doctrines we know within specific traditions and these doctrines influence ideas we find in a text. The text can enhance the doctrines, or challenge them and vice versa. Entangled agency therefore, can challenge theology, but also enhance theology.

Entangled agency from an agential realist approach challenges theology because it is a non-theological theory. The approach of Barad, trying to incorporate it into theology, raises

¹³⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 393.

several questions and invites to rethink the role of the messianic within theology. Using entangled agency raises questions about our perspective on the non-human agents in this world. Using it with and in the Isaiah text sheds light on the entanglement of God, humanity and the non-human creation, but also the entanglement between this relationality and specific doctrinal constructs.

Using the concept of entangled agency enhances and challenges the way of approaching the Bible, and rethinking our relation towards God and the non-human creation and therefore rethinking doctrines that have influenced our thinking about biblical texts. Entangled agency from an agential realist approach challenges theology in the way that Isaiah might not be suitable for projecting contemporary issues onto the text. As John Barton states:

We do well in turning to the Old Testament to realize that it does come from a non-modern culture, and cannot be simply applied to our world without adjustment. There are indeed themes about ‘Peace, Justice, and the Integrity of Creation’, but they work with a very different mindset from ours.¹³⁸

Where Barton is sceptical to relate contemporary issues with historical issues, with Conradie in mind the bridge between now and a Biblical then can be made through doctrinal constructs. Entangled agency in that sense works as a contemporary concept pointing out a contemporary issue of anthropocentrism in light of environmental challenges. Using entangled agency then means an interplay with the text, and with doctrines, preserving the value of text and context on its own, the tradition through several doctrines, but also the relation to now.

Using the concept of entangled agency enhances and challenges relating to criticism on Christian acting when it comes to environmental challenges. Ecological theology until now was focused on the apologetics against White or trying to find where the Bible is green. Entangled agency helps to understand the relation between God, humanity and the non-human agents. This is the fundament underneath the questions whether the Bible is green, or anthropocentric. With the lens of entangled agency it can be pointed out who are the actors and that these acting actors, who or whatever they are, have influence on everything that is matter. In Isaiah 11:1–10 this entails the agency of God which is the most important, but also the transformation of humanity and the non-human creation to non-evil agents shows

¹³⁸ J. Barton, “Reading the Prophets from an Environmental Perspective” in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. D. Horrell, C. Hunt, C. Southgate and F. Stavrakopoulou (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2010), 53.

how different actions influence the environment. When researching biblical texts with entangled agency, it moves beyond just exegesis, or just systematic theology.

Using the concept of entangled agency enhances and challenges theology in staying sharp when green ideologies are implemented without further reflection. Using the concept of entangled agency raises awareness for the entanglement with creation, on the one hand as a critique, but on the other hand as a lens and method for discovering the value of interrelations in the Bible and the interrelations of the Bible with doctrines. entangled agency follows the line of a scientification of religion and even a form of dark green religion, where the focus on environmental challenges becomes dominant, as environmental ethic Bron Taylor states:

Dark green religion is an important part of environmentalist milieu; it is a global phenomenon with diverse manifestations in different cultures and social sectors; its participants wish to change the way we feel, think, and relate to the natural world; and they spread their faith in ways that sometimes involve ritual and religion-resembling practices.¹³⁹

Entangled agency then, can be the perspective that brings environmental awareness into a theological discourse. On the other hand, entangled agency helps to keep an eye on all aspects that influence and challenge interpretations of a biblical text, and influences the interpretation of entanglement within a text. It enhances theology in enriching its language to stay entangled in a world where theology and science might seem miles apart from each other. Moreover, with different parameters using entangled agency in the twofold way that I have presented in this thesis, opens up the possibility to rethink different bible texts in relation to different doctrinal constructs. As we have seen with Barad herself using different parameters in §1.3.1, different outcomes are possible, even outcomes that will collide with different doctrines. The colliding of different parameters is then an ongoing movement into time and space. Employing this while reading the bible text, doctrinal constructs and contemporary contexts develop forward, intra-related together.

¹³⁹ B. Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 176.

Conclusion

In search of a way of theologizing in light of environmental challenges I stumbled upon entangled agency as a concept that might help understanding our relation towards creation. I started with unfolding the concept of entangled agency from an agential realist approach from Barad. Entangled agency from an agential realist approach means two things. On the one hand, there is a notion of entanglement between all that is matter. Everything that exists is somehow connected, entangled to each other. Entangled agency from this perspective can be something to research. It is then the question: what does entangled agency look like? On the other hand, entangled agency could be employed as a method. This means that in a web of entanglement, I can make choices which influence the interpretation of the text. This is based upon the idea that everything is entangled. This means that everything influences each other. When employed in research, this means that the choices we make in research influence the outcome of the thing we research. Within the theory of agential realism this process of influencing is best explained with the theory of diffraction. Diffraction within this thesis is a process of waves moving through space and time, but also encountering obstacles. These obstacles influence the ongoing movement of the waves.

The next big step was to incorporate this twofold way of entangled agency into theology. Because the concept of entangled agency is merely non-theological, there is a danger that using the concept would only lead to immanent outcomes. For example, Barad herself, tried to examine the idea of the messianic where the outcome was that this could not be grasped in a figure, but is merely a time and space changing event. However, working with the Bible as the word of God, and a word of people, the Bible serves as a bridge between the transcendent and immanent. In light of environmental challenges, the specific genre of the prophetic texts serves as a voice that can stimulate a change of behaviour.

Working towards Isaiah 11:1–10 with entangled agency from an agential realist approach, and with environmental challenges kept in mind, the next step was to determine an ecological theological framework. I introduced Marlow and Conradie, who both approached theology from a different perspective. Marlow searched for the interconnectedness between God, humanity and the non-human creation. Whereas Conradie proposed a rethinking of doctrinal constructs that influence our way of reading the Bible. It is with these two theologians that entangled agency could be employed as a subject of research and as a method of diffraction. With the ecological theology of Marlow I examined the entanglement between God, humanity and the non-human creation. With the ecological theology of

Conradie I started a process of diffraction. Conradie proposed to rethink the doctrines of salvation, reconciliation and the moral influences of the biblical texts. The method of diffraction then, was entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10, influenced by the doctrines Conradie proposed; entangled agency with Isaiah 11:1–10.

Entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10, using the ecological theology of Marlow, resulted in the claim that the entanglement between humanity and the non-human creation could only exist with God as a crucial factor. The acting of God through the descendant of Ishay, the shoot from the trunk, establishes the future image of peace and rest on His holy mountain. From the destroyed forest, new life sprouts, which show besides God as a creator, that God also destroys and restores. Judgement is upon the poor, the meek and the wicked shall even be killed. All leading up to the future image of peace between predator and prey, vulnerable and powerful. The total order of creation after the fall, then, is turned upside down. The text shows a movement away from aggression, that even the animals will live together in peace, and the suckling and the small child are safe near the den of known venomous snakes. The portrayed future image is meant for human and non-human agents. God, through the descendant of Ishay, will fill the earth with the knowledge about him. Not only humanity will have the knowledge of God, but the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, and on that day there will be no evil. The image that unfolded with researching the concept of entangled agency in Isaiah 11:1–10 is that there is entanglement between both humanity and non-human creation, through God. This is captured in the will of God for humanity and the non-human creation to live together again, without aggression, on His holy mountain that is glory. It is with this prophetic image I approached the process of diffraction.

Entangled agency as a method using Isaiah 11:1–10 as starting point was executed by letting the text bump with the, by Conradie proposed, doctrinal constructs. I first let the text bump into the doctrinal construct of salvation with the notion of victory over destruction, and victory over evil. The doctrine aligned with the destruction of the forest where new life would sprout from, and the victory over evil where the wicked will be killed, and where in the end no evil will be done.

The doctrine of salvation responds to the text, but also to the doctrine of reconciliation. When the text bumps into the doctrine of reconciliation, the doctrine of reconciliation responds to the text with the restoration of the relation with God, through the work of the descendant of Ishay. Through this work the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, restoring not only the relation between God and humanity, but also

between humanity and the non-human agents, and the non-human agents and God. The restoration of these relations, reconciliation, mean that in the end no evil is done anymore, salvation. In a state of being saved, there is rest upon His holy mountain. The future image that is presented in Isaiah 11:1–10 gives hope. It presents an image of how creation should be; without aggression. On the one hand, God will play a crucial role in the development of this image. On the other hand, the text can influence humanity to rethink its behaviour; the wicked shall be killed. Moreover, the thought for changing behaviour can be implied towards the relation between humanity and the non-human creation. This future image of His mountain of Glory, is for both humanity and the non-human creation, and both should be there when the time comes.

When working with the concept of entangled agency and Isaiah 11:1–10, theology is challenged and enhanced. The concept of entangled agency challenges theology into rethinking doctrines, it challenges our way of approaching the Bible, and rethinking our relation towards God and the non-human creation. It enhances our theology relating to criticism on Christian acting when it comes to environmental challenges. It enhances theology in staying sharp when green ideologies are implemented without further reflection. It enhances theology in enriching its language to stay entangled in a world where theology and science might seem miles apart from each other.

Employing the concept of entangled agency opposes questions on an interdisciplinary level where it can serve as a bridge between multiple disciplines. For further research the employment of entangled agency within theology in cooperation with other disciplines would be interesting. How do different sciences influence how theology is done, and vice versa?

Employing the concept of entangled agency within theology brings up questions of how other sources of knowledge, even from a non-scientific background, can enhance theology. For further research the employment of entangled agency in theology would be interesting in practical theology, discovering the entanglement within congregations. Entangled agency can be employed in much more ways, thinking of different bible texts and different doctrinal constructs. Using entangled agency opens up a new world of interpretations everytime a new development is added to the entangled movement into time and space.

For ministers, pastors, clerics, believers and non-believers, entangled agency can help create new insights on dealing with environmental challenges and questions of biblical proportions. It is a new perspective and a tool for approaching the bible in relation to tradition, and our contemporary context.

The shape on the cover exists out of two arrows, meeting each other in the middle.
The non-theological concept of entangled agency, meets ecological theology in the middle.
That is how entangled agency could be employed as a hermeneutical key in Isaiah 11:1-10.

Bibliography

- Barad, K. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Duke: University Press, 2007.
- Barad, K. "What Flashes Up: Theological-Political-Scientific Fragments." In *Entangled Worlds: Religion, Science, and New Materialisms*, edited by C. Keller and M. Rubenstein. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017.
- Barton, J. "Reading the Prophets from an Environmental Perspective." In *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*, edited by D. Horrell, C. Hunt, C. Southgate and F. Stavropoulou. New York, NY: T&T Clark International. 2010.
- Barnard, M. and J. Cilliers, and C. Wepener, *Worship in the Network Culture: Liturgical Ritual Studies. Fields and Methods, Concepts and Metaphors*. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.
- Brueggemann, W. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018.
- Clements, R.E. "The Wolf Shall Live With The Lamb: Reading Isaiah 11:6-9 Today." In *New Heaven and New Earth Prophecy and the Millenium*, edited by P.J. Harland and C.T.R. Hayward. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Conradie, E.M. "The Road Towards an Ecological Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics." In *Scriptura*, no. 93 (2006).
- Conradie, E.M. "What on Earth is an Ecological hermeneutics? Some broad parameters." In *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*, edited by D. Horrell, C. Hunt, C. Southgate and F. Stavropoulou. New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2010.
- Conradie, E.M. "Introduction." In *Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology*, edited by E.M. Conradie. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Conradie, E.M. "Conclusion: Kuyper's Significance for Ecotheology and the Need for Further Reflection on Creation and Salvation." In *Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology*, edited by E.M. Conradie. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

- Conradie, E.M. “Reconciliation as One Guiding Vision For South Africa?: Conceptual Analysis and Theological Reflection.” In *Reconciliation a Guiding Vision for South Africa?*, edited by E.M. Conradie. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2017.
- Dunk, R.A. “Diffracting the Quantum and the Social: Meeting the Universe Halfway in Social Science.” *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies*, vol. 20, (2020). 225-234.
- Van Gemeren, W.A. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: volume 2*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997.
- Habel, C. *Readings From the Perspective of Earth: Earth Bible Volume One*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Horrell, D. G. “Ecological Hermeneutics: Origins, Approaches, and Prospects.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Ecology*, edited by H. Marlow and M. Harris. Oxford: University Press, 2022.
- Juelskjær, M. and H. Plauborg and S.W. Adrian, *Dialogues on Agential Realism: Engaging in Worldings through Research Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2021.
- Leighton, C. and A. Gregerman, “Isaiah 11:1–11.” *Interpretation* 64, no. 3 (2010). 284-289.
- Marlow, H. *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2009.
- Marlow, H. “Reading from the Ground Up: Nature in the Book of Isaiah.” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Ecology*, edited by H. Marlow, and M. Harris. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2022.
- Marlowe, C.W. “The Spirit Chiasm in Isaiah 11,2a-3a.” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 28, no. 1 (2014). 44-57.
- Olley, J.W. “The Wolf, the Lamb, and a Little Child: Transforming the Diverse Earth Community in Isaiah.” in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, edited by N.C. Habel. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Oswalt, J. N. *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Perry, D.W. *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants*. Leiding: Brill, 2019.
- Ramantswana, H. “Not Free While Nature Remains Colonised: A Decolonial Reading of Isaiah 11:6-9.” *Old Testament Essays* 28, no. 3 (2015). 807-831.

- Roberts, J. J. M. *First Isaiah: A Commentary, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015.
- Rudolph, W. and G. E. Weil, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, edited by K. Elliger. 5th edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.
- Taylor, B. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2010.
- Ulrich, E. *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Von Stuckrad, K. *The Scientification of Religion*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.
- White Jr, L. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science: New Series* 155, no. 3767 (1967). 1203-1207.
- Williamson, H. G. M. *Isaiah 6–12: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary: International Critical Commentary*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018.