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Liken God to the (Disabled) Servant: Approaching (Two) Bodies in Isaiah 40-55

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Abstract: *When Isaiah 40:18 asks "To whom might you liken God? What likeness might you set up for him?" readers of Isaiah 40-55 encounter potent rhetoric that invites analysis. Recognizing that corporeality is key to the rhetoric of Isaiah 40-55, spatial theory and disabilities studies offer promising hermeneutical approaches to analyze the bodies of Isaiah 40-55. By synthesizing these approaches, this study establishes a mixed-methods approach which it then applies to representations of corporeality in Isaiah 40-55. This mixed-methods analysis reveals an underlying corporeal-spatial rhetoric throughout Isaiah 40-55. Characters portrayed with only a single reference to their body tend to remain insignificant. Characters with two or three references to their body typically appear in weak (straw man) arguments. Characters represented with greater corporeal complexity (i.e., more than three body parts) prove to be rhetorically complex figures. Identifying comparable complexity in God's body and the body of the Servant, the conclusion emerges: liken God to the (disabled) Servant.*

Keywords: *Isaiah 40-55; Second Isaiah; Suffering Servant; Corporeality/Embodiment; Critical Spatial Theory; Disability Studies; Hebrew Bible Rhetoric*

Introduction

ואל־מי תדמיון אל ומה דמות תערכו לו

To whom might you liken God?
And, what likeness might you set up for him? (Isa 40:18)

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While the conclusion remains tacit, the forceful rhetoric of Isa 40:18 coerces readers to assent to the author's biases.[2] Audiences must utter what the author refrains from saying: *you may liken no one to God* and *you may not set up a likeness for him*! The text may be elliptical, but it insistently provokes assent to its position, which has repeatedly been identified as "exclusive monotheism" characteristic of Isaiah 40-55 (so-called second Isaiah).[3] The two subsequent verses complete the pericope by making the point explicit and emphasizing it:

הפסל נסך חרש וצרף בזהב ירקענו ורתקות כסף צורף
המסכן תרומה עץ לא־ירקב יבחר חרש חכם יבקש־לו להכין פסל לא ימוט

The idol – a craftsman casts it; by refining he plates it with gold, and silver chains he casts for it. The one impoverished(?) of an offering chooses imperishable wood, seeks out a skilled craftsman for it, to set up an idol that might not be moved. (Isa 40:19-20)

While questions have been raised about the (exclusive) monotheism of Isaiah 40-55, reading Isa 40:18-20 as anti-"idol" rhetoric in support of

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[2] C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 23; Yehoshua Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40-48*, Forum Theologiae Linguisticae 24 (Bonn: Linguistica Biblica, 1981), 88-94. On the impact of rhetorical questions on audience biases and views, see Kevin Winter, Annika Scholl, and Kai Sassenberg, "Flexible Minds Make More Moderate Views: Subtractive Counterfactuals Mitigate Strong Views about Immigrants' Trustworthiness," Group Processes & Intergroup Relations (June 2022): 1-19.

[3] On exclusive monotheism in Second Isaiah, see (for example) Martin Leuenberger, *"Ich bin Jhwh und keiner sonst": Der exclusive Monotheismus des Kyros-Orakels Jes 45, 1-7*, SBS 224 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2010); and Hywel Clifford, "Deutero-Isaiah and Monotheism," in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day, T & T Clark Library of Biblical Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 267-89. For two assessments of the three-fold division of Isaiah, see James D. Nogalski, "Changing Perspectives in Isaiah 40-55," *PRSt* 43 (2016): 215-225; and Ulrich Berges, "The Literary Construction of the Servant in Isaiah 40-55: A Discussion about Individual and Collective Identities," *SJOT* 24 (2010): 18-28. For an interesting development on monotheism in (first) Isaiah, see Matthew J. Lynch, *First Isaiah and the Disappearance of the Gods*, CSHB 12 (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021), esp. 1-18.

strict monotheism has nonetheless been commonplace, and remains a significant interpretation in the literature.[4] Accordingly, these verses serve as an apt source for readers who explore similar arguments against "idolatry."[5] God, in these readings, tends to appear transcendent and aloof. But other readings are possible.

One alternative reading of Isaiah 40:18 applies a subtle approach, calling readers to perceive an underlying analogy in the verse's anti-"idol" rhetoric. This reading maintains that God is to Israel as "idol" makers are to "idols."[6] That is, God, in fact, fashions and sets up a self-likeness in a manner similar to ancient "idol"-makers. But the difference, in God's case, is that the likeness is a complex, living entity – Israel. So, according to this reading, God is to be compared to Israel, which establishes a far more intimate connection between God and humanity.

Still another approach to Isaiah 40:18 might draw upon pre-critical Christian hermeneutics in which Jesus associates with the Servant and God. Such Jesus-Servant-God correspondence appears early and often in traditional Christian interpretation of Isaiah.[7] Although critical scholarship typically avoids such readings and the approach that

[4] On questions about and discussions of exclusive monotheism in Isa 40-55, see (for example) Saul M. Olyan, "Is Isaiah 40-55 Really Monotheistic?," *JANER* 12: 190-201; and Nathan MacDonald, "Monotheism and Isaiah," in *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David G. Firth and Hugh G.M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 43-61. I use quotation marks with "idol" and "idolatry" throughout this article to indicate my distance from the biblical polemic associated with these terms.

[5] For examples, see Mark W. Elliott (ed.), *Isaiah 40-66*, ACCS Old Testament 11 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 15-18; and John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 139.

[6] MacDonald, "Monotheism and Isaiah," esp. 52-54. On the original audience of Isaiah 40-55, see Pieter van der Lugt, *The Rhetorical Design of Isaiah 40-48/55: Zion's Incomparable Saviour and His Servants*, OtSt 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2020): 75, n. 9.

[7] For select examples, see Elliott, *Isaiah 40-66*, 112-114.

accompanies them, postcritical scholarship remains open to them.[8] From a post-critical perspective responding to Isaiah 40:18 might highlight a (more restricted) God-servant correspondence, and focus on a narrower corpus, say Isaiah 40-55. Moreover, the overlap between post-critical and ideological critical approaches suggests that an ideological approach that eschews the pre/post-critical Christological hermeneutic might generate a reading that leads naturally to a comparison of God and the servant.[9] Put differently, there may be non-Christological reasons to liken God to the Servant in Isaiah 40-55. The present study proposes just that. By synthesizing critical space theory and disability studies – two critical approaches with ideological affinities – a mixed-methods approach is used here to analyze embodied characters and corporeal functions in Isaiah 40-55. Ultimately, only one character fittingly likens to God in Isaiah 40-55: the disabled Servant. This comparison, consequently, permits discerning God's immanence at the heart of rhetoric aimed at emphasizing divine transcendence.

The argument unfolds in two basic parts. First, a methodology section presents the work of Henri Lefebvre and Jeremey Schipper to

[8] While postcritical scholarship tends to be more circumspect than pre-critical scholarship about associating the Servant and Jesus, frequent appeal to (Second and Third) Isaiah in Christian lectionaries and liturgies results in no shortage of articles that maintain the Jesus-Servant-God association. For select examples see Diane Jacobson, "Isaiah in Advent: The Transforming Word," *WW* 10 (1990): 384-389; Christine Roy Yoder, "Hope that Walks: An Interpretation of Isaiah for Advent Preachers," *Journal for Preachers* 25 (2001): 17-24; John F. A. Sawyer, "The Gospel according to Isaiah," *ExpTim* 113 (2001): 39-43. For one of many arguments cautioning use of the postcritical approach with Isaiah, see Mordecai Schreiber, "The Real 'Suffering Servant': Decoding a Controversial Passage in the Bible," *JBQ* 37 (2009): 35-44.

[9] On overlap between ideological and postcritical scholarship, see Carol A. Newsom, "Reflections on Ideological Criticism and Postcritical Perspectives," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards, SBLRBS 56 (Atlanta: SBL 2009), 541-59. For one recent ideological reading of the Suffering Servant, see David Wyn Williams, *Conversations with a Suffering Servant* (London: T & T Clark, 2021).

introduce critical-space theory and disability studies respectively. Schipper's disabled reading of the Servant in Isaiah 53 facilitates synthesizing spatiality and disabilities studies in a mixed-methods approach. The second part of the study applies this mixed-methods approach in an analysis of character corporeality in Isaiah 40-55. The analysis shows that embodied characters of Isaiah 40-55 have one of three body types: 1) simple bodies consisting of one body part, 2) unsophisticated bodies consisting of two or three body parts, and 3) complex bodies, consisting of multiple body parts. Simple-bodied characters generally remain insignificant in Isaiah 40-55 while unsophisticated bodies appear in unsophisticated (i.e., straw man) arguments. Complex bodies, however, are comparatively rare and highlight God and the Servant as two characters meriting further ableist analysis. By comparing the bodies of God and the Servant, a response to the questions of Isaiah 40:18 follows naturally from the corporeal rhetoric of (so-called) Second Isaiah: the only character fittingly likened to God in Isaiah 40-55 is the disabled Servant.

Spatiality, Disability Studies, & Isaiah's Servant – A Synthesis

Spatial analysis of realia (e.g., architecture) and domains of representation (e.g., literature) constitute long-standing interests in the humanities, social-sciences, and hard sciences but increased interest in space-related studies in recent decades have generated a spatial turn.[10] Spatial analysis gets discussed variously as geo-criticism,

[10] For descriptions and surveys of the current spatial turn and its relation to the Bible, see James W. Flanagan, "Ancient Perceptions of Space/Perceptions of Ancient Space," *Semeia* 87 (1999): 15-43; Matthew Sleeman, "Critical Space Theory 2.0," in *Constructions of Space V: Place, Space and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Gert T. M. Prinsloo and Christl M. Maier, LHBOTS 576 (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 49-66; and Patrick Schreiner, "Space, Place and Biblical Studies: A Survey of Recent Research in Light of Developing Trends," *CurBR* 14 (2016): 340-71.

spatial studies, or critical-space theory.[11] And while some object to spatial approaches in the humanities, the work continues to focus on spatial realia and representation(s) while eschewing temporal matters (i.e., history), which it regards as the preeminent interest of Enlightenment predecessors.[12] For present purposes, Henri Lefebvre's space-critical work will exemplify spatial analysis.

Spatial Analysis with Henri Lefebvre

In his field-defining monograph, *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre argues that space is socially constructed vis-à-vis the manipulation of various fields, categories, and levels.[13] He arrives at his conclusion after critiquing modern philosophy's concept of space as an ephemeral epistemological given – an *a priori* trait of human knowledge – that fails to connect with reality.[14] For Lefebvre, modern philosophy may theorize space in many ways, but it fails to connect "mental spaces" with "real spaces," which are alterable, transformable, and produced –

[11] For introductions and examples, see Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin, eds. *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2001); Bertrand Westphal, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, trans. By Robert T. Tally Jr. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 [French original 2007]); Stephan Günzel, ed. *Raumwissenschaft*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 1891 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009); Christian Reutlinger, Caroline Fritsche, and Eva Lingg, eds., *Raumwissenschaftliche Basics: Eine Einführung für die Soziale Arbeit*, Sozialraumfoschung und Sozialraumarbeit 7 (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften | Springer Fachmedien, 2010); Robert T. Tally Jr., ed., *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[12] For an early objection to spatial analysis see Luke Gärtner-Brereton, *The Ontology of Space in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: The Determinate Function of Narrative "Space" within the Biblical Hebrew Aesthetic* (London: Equinox, 2008), 36-40. For a sustained objection to space-critical analysis in the humanities, see Leif Jerram, "Space: A Useless Category for Historical Analysis?" *HistTh* 52 (2013): 400-419. On the connection of temporal concerns with Enlightenment thinkers, see Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 70.

[13] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), esp. 12-18, 31-46.

[14] Lefebvre, 1-7.

there is no (social) science of space in modernist philosophy according to Lefebvre.[15] He is not alone in his concern. Exegetes have begun to resonate with Lefebvre.[16]

To counter the perceived modernist division of mental and real spaces, Lefebvre expounds a theoretical unity among three "fields" of space – *physical* (nature, the cosmos), *mental* (logical and formal abstractions), and *social* (a product of practices and imagination – projects, projections, symbols, and utopias).[17] In these "fields" are various "levels" (e.g., architecture [housing], urbanism [cities], planning/economy [territories, regions]) and a deeper "spatial code" or spatial language in which every society and all members of a society (or mode of production) "read" space.[18] Spatial levels focus discourse on a topic while the categories of a spatial code provide rules for discourse. To use a language analogy, Lefebvre's spatial levels are like vocabulary while the categories of his spatial "code" are like grammar and syntax. Important for present purposes, Lefebvre identifies the body (corporeality/corporeal space) as a key level of interest for space-critical scholarship.[19] The level of corporeality or corporeal space focuses the present study.

As for categories, Lefebvre identifies a three-fold set which he initially calls spatial practice (*pratique spatiale*), representations of space (*représentations de l'espace*), and representational spaces (*les espaces de la représentation*).[20] He subsequently dubs these perceived space (*l'espace*

[15] Lefebvre, 7-8.

[16] For one discussion see Alan L. Mittleman, *Human Nature and Jewish Thought: Judaism's Case for Why Persons Matter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 26-29.

[17] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 11-12.

[18] Lefebvre, 12, 16-18.

[19] Lefebvre, 40.

[20] Lefebvre, 33.

perçu), conceived space (*l'espace conçu*), and lived space (*l'espace vécu*).[21] These sets of categories overlap but differ in that the former emphasizes social production and functions of space, while the latter highlights anthropological dimensions of spatial production. Still, for Lefebvre, the two are unified. An example may help explain his position.

If we take the human body as our level of spatial focus, analysis of *perceived* space identifies and analyzes the physiology – extension, shape, and size – of various parts of the body.[22] While biblical literature may limit its attention to and descriptions of physiological space, analysis of such space, in this approach, also entails acknowledging accompanying, socially-instilled ideology.[23] Afterall, how one perceives a nose's extension, shape, and size can convey perception bias.[24] In this way, analysis of perceived space is tied up with "*spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction [as it] ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion."[25] For present purposes, analysis of perceived spaces of bodies (perceived corporeal space)

[21] Lefebvre, 38-39.

[22] Lefebvre, 40.

[23] Physiological descriptions in the Hebrew Bible are relatively circumspect, even rare. Some narratives advance because of a character's appearance (e.g., Joseph's beauty [יפה] in Gen 39:6), but no physiological description is provided. Characters whose physiology is described include Saul (1 Sam 9:2), David (1 Sam 16:12), and Absalom (2 Sam 14:25-26). Still, scholarship on Hebrew Bible physiology is voluminous. The primary interest of such scholarship, however, lies not in uncovering Israelite/Judahite (scribal) knowledge of physiology, but in the concepts associated with Hebrew physiological terms. Accordingly, the focus of such scholarship quickly becomes a discussion of "*conceived*" rather than "*perceived*" space. For one study of physiology in the OT/HB, see John Wilkinson, "The Body in the Old Testament," *EQ* 63 (1991): 195-210. For a sense of the complexity associated with the representation of (male) physiology in the Hebrew Bible, see Stuart Macwilliam, "Ideologies of Male Beauty and the Hebrew Bible," *BibInt* 17 (2009): 265-87.

[24] Sander Gilman, "The Jewish Nose: Are Jews White? Or, the History of the Nose Job," in *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 169-93.

[25] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33.

entails identifying terms in Isaiah 40-55 that refer to body parts and the characters to whom those parts are ascribed.

Conceived spatial analysis entails identifying concepts associated with spaces. From Lefebvre's sociological perspective, such concepts produce "representations of space" in cultural deposits like the Bible to order and govern shared (social) knowledge.[26] But here too, Lefebvre notes that "representations of space are shot through with a knowledge (*savoir*) – i.e. a mixture of understanding (*connaissance*) and ideology – which is always relative and in the process of change."[27] In the case of the Hebrew Bible, concepts associated with the body have been well-recognized.[28] One example is the appeal to the "nose" (אף) when representing wrath or anger in expressions like ויחר אפו ("his nose became hot").[29] Thus, a nose in the Hebrew Bible may represent a conceived space of anger or wrath. In the present study, attending to conceived space means identifying and bearing in mind concepts associated with body parts mentioned in Isaiah 40-55.

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[26] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 40.

[27] Lefebvre, 41.

[28] Geiger articulates the situation most pointedly: "Keiner der hebräischen Körperbegriffe bezeichnet ausschließlich ein konkretes, objektiv beschreibbares Körperteil oder Organ, sondern jeder steht für ein Konzept, das mit diesem Organ verbunden ist;" Michaela Geiger, *Gottesräume: Die literarische und theologische Konzeption von Raum im Deuteronomium*, BWANT 183 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 49. For thorough bibliographies treating concepts associated with body parts in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament see Izak Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," in *Congress Volume Stellenbosch 2016*, ed. Louis C. Jonker, Gideon R. Kotzé, and Christl M. Maier, VTSup 177 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 195-227, esp. n. 47; and Bernd Janowski, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments: Grundfragen – Kontexte – Themenfelder* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 137-82, esp. bibliography on 137. To these I add Christoph Markschies, *Gottes Körper: Jüdische, christliche und pagane Gottesvorstellungen in der Antike* (München: C. H. Beck, 2016); and Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *God: An Anatomy* (New York: Knopf, 2022).

[29] *HALOT*, s.v. "אף II;" Geiger, *Gottesräume*, 49; Jan Bergman and Elsie Johnson, "אָנַף ʾānaph; אף ʾaph (*zaʿam*, *zaʿaph*, *chemah*, *charah*, *ʾabhar*, *qatsaph*, *raghaz*)," in *TDOT*, 1:348-60; Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, vol. 1 (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press, 1926), 175; Thomas Staubli and Silvia Schroer, *Body Symbolism in the Bible*, trans. by Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 94-96; Janowski, *Anthropologie*, 143.

Lived space refers to instances in which a space is (re)appropriated by everyday users to bolster, augment, challenge, or contradict associated conceptual spaces.[30] So, a biblical passage might mention a biblical character's nose and thereby refer to his or her inclination toward anger without indicating explicitly that their nose is ablaze or even hot.[31] In such a case the nose's lived space relies on a pre-established conceived space without explicitly conveying that space's conceptual expectations – the nose stands for anger but does not smolder. Alternately, a character prone to anger may manifest anger by being described as blazing or burning without a direct reference to his or her nose.[32] Here we have "*representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not."[33] At this juncture, normative corporeal function or lack thereof enters our analysis. Accordingly, we turn to disabilities studies.

Disabilities Studies with Jeremey Schipper

In his work with disabilities studies, Jeremy Schipper outlines three approaches to disability that echo Lefebvre's spatial categories. The first approach he calls the "medical model of disability," which "understands disability as an anomalous condition isolated in an

[30] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 38-39. For further application see Reineth C. E. Prinsloo and Gert T. M. Prinsloo, "Family as Lived Space: An Interdisciplinary and Intertextual Reading of Genesis 34," in *Constructions of Space V: Place, Space and Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Christl M. Maier and Gert T. Prinsloo, LHBOTS 576 (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 158-78, esp. 163.

[31] Gen 27:45, for example, mentions Esau's nose to refer to his anger toward Jacob but fails to mention his nose being heated, enflamed, or ablaze.

[32] See Isa 42:25 where "blazing up" (להט) and "burning" (בער) associate with Jacob to indicate wrath like that of a "blazing nose" (חרה אף), but Jacob's nose is not explicitly mentioned.

[33] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33.

individual's body [and] not at all in [one's] experience of society's larger structures."[34] This model closely ties disability with perceived corporeal space (i.e., physiology), but Schipper rejects it because 1) it fails to "critically examine the social and political structures that contribute to [...] disability," and 2) "the Hebrew Bible rarely discusses disability within a medical context."[35]

A second approach to disabilities studies, known as the "social model of disability," defines disability as "socially created discrimination against people with impairments."[36] Schipper eschews this model for what Lefebvre might call an excessive focus on *conceived* corporeal space.[37] Disability is more than a given society's systemic bias toward or discrimination against certain concepts of corporeal space. "Disability is a real, lived social experience," says Schipper, "that describes how many people with impairments experience the world [...] social discrimination is not the only factor that restricts a wheelchair user's mobility."[38] In other words, lived and perceived spaces of the body also play a role in recognizing and analyzing

[34] Jeremy Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, Biblical Refigurations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.

[35] Schipper, *Disability*, 15. Of note, Schipper acknowledges that "certain Babylonian and Assyrian 'diagnostic texts' approach disability as a medical issue," (15). As a result, it is entirely possible that biblical scribes/authors were capable of identifying disability from a medical perspective, but biblical texts provide limited evidence of this approach, especially Isaiah. Consequently, Schipper's dismissal of the medical model is not a dismissal of perceived space as a valuable category for analyzing bodies in Isaiah 40-55 nor is it a dismissal of medical approaches to disabilities in general. Rather, Schipper dismisses the medical model primarily because the approach would be unproductive for his purposes. For further discussions of Schipper's sentiments and approach, see Saul M. Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting mental and Physical Differences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 147-48 n. 5; Jeremy Schipper, *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David* Story, LHBOTS 441 (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 64-73; also Rebecca Raphael, *Biblical Corpora: Representations of Disability in Hebrew Biblical Literature*, LHBOTS 445 (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 1-28, esp. 14-15.

[36] Distinct from the concept of "disability" in the social model is its concept of "impairment" which is simply "a particular physical, emotional, or cognitive trait that results in the inability of the mind or body to function as expected" (Schipper, *Disability*, 16).

[37] For Schipper's critique of the social model of disability see, *Disability*, 16-17.

[38] Schipper, *Disability*, 16-17.

disability. Noting also an insurmountable problem when applying the social model of disability to Ancient Near Eastern cultures in general, Schipper rejects this model in favor of a cultural model of disability.[39]

The cultural model of disability, according to Schipper, amounts to "the social *experience* of persons with certain impairments," which means this model aims to recognize "how an individual or community [...] articulates or narrates these social experiences [based] on the type(s) of language they use."[40] Schipper applies this model to the depiction of the Servant in Isaiah 53 and ultimately concludes that "the servant's social and political experience [is] of *living* with impairments."[41] Accordingly, Schipper regards the Servant in Isaiah 53 as "a figure with disabilities."[42] The Servant lives with both physiological and social realia that impair his participation in society – realities Schipper analyzes at length.

The Disabled Servant of Isaiah 53

Since Isaiah 53 overwhelmingly represents the Servant's social experience as marked by isolation proper to someone with a skin anomaly, Schipper maintains that the Servant in this chapter is portrayed as disabled.[43] To put a finer point on the matter, Schipper explains that the Servant in Isaiah 53 is disabled not because of "a diagnosis but [as] a comment on the description of his social

[39] According to Schipper (*Disability*, 17), impairment and disability cannot be distinguished in Ancient Near Eastern texts, despite the distinction being key to the social model of disability.
[40] Schipper, *Disability*, 18, emphasis mine.
[41] Schipper, 18, emphasis again mine.
[42] Schipper, 31.
[43] Schipper, 36-42.

experience of impairment."[44] That is, Schipper's argument is a matter of spatial use. Isaiah represents the Servant as negotiating space in a disabled way. Since his lived space is that of a disabled person, the Servant is to be understood as disabled.

In effect, Schipper is reacting to Duhm's often-repeated assertion that the servant is leprous – a medical disability.[45] While Schipper eschews Duhm's medical approach, he accepts that the Servant's social experiences match those of other biblical figures stricken with skin anomalies, for they too are "profaned" (מחלל) (Isa 53:5), "crushed" (מדכא) (Isa 53:5, 10), "excluded" (נגזר) (Isa 53:8), and "stricken" (נגע) (Isa 53.8).[46] Citing numerous biblical examples of isolation like that of the Servant, Schipper explains that all have "social experience[s] connected to Israelite practices concerning ritual purity and impurity."[47] Schipper further notes that the social implications of "hiding one's face from others [cf. Isa 53:3] correspond[s] with ancient Near Eastern 'skin anomaly' curses that speak of exclusion of people with skin anomalies (Akkadian: *saharshuppu*) from the temple."[48] So, the Servant's condition isolates him from society like someone

[44] Schipper, 37.

[45] Schipper, *Disability*, 32-33; Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia: Übersezt und erklärt*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968 [1st edition 1892]), 396-401, esp. 398. Among those who follow Duhm, see Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*, Hermeneia, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 408; Karl Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja: Erklärt*, KHC 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900), 347-48; Odil Hannes Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja*, FAT 4 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 22; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, OTL, trans. David M. G. Stalker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 92. But not all follow Duhm. For example, Childs maintains "it is a mistake to seek to specify the sickness too precisely, as if leprosy (Duhm) were intended;" Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 417.

[46] Schipper, *Disability*, 32-33. Dismissing Duhm's medical approach to disability, Schipper notes that Isaiah 53 describes the Servant's plight using a "general Hebrew word for sickness or disease (*ḥlh*) [חלה Isa 53:3, 10]" instead of "צרעת," which is the word more commonly associated with leprosy. Even so, Schipper further notes that use of the latter term should also not necessarily connote the medical condition of leprosy (Hansen's Disease).

[47] For the quote see Schipper, *Disability*, 39. Notably, King Uzziah's skin anomaly (see 2 Chr 26:20-21) leaves him "excluded" (נגזר) and "stricken" (נגע).

[48] Schipper, *Disability*, 37.

regarded as impure due to a skin anomaly. Spatially speaking, the Servant's body separates him from community. The lived space of his body makes him remote, isolated from ordinary social experience. According to the cultural model of disability such impairment-wrought-isolation renders the Servant disabled.

Along with rendering the Servant isolated due to a skin anomaly, Schipper identifies additional imagery rendering the Servant as (culturally) disabled. Such imagery includes: 1. the Servant's marred appearance (Isa 53:3-4), 2. his "stunted growth" (Isa 53:2), 3. a non-descript dryness "like a root out of dry ground" (וכשרש מארץ ציה, Isa 53:2), and 4. allusions to cognitive impairment (Isa 52:13-14, 53:4-6).[49] Important for present purposes, the imagery indicating the Servant's disabled corporeal space, appears beyond Isaiah 53. Isaiah 49:7, for example, echoes language in Isaiah 52:14 which describes the Servant as "marred" (משחת) in "appearance" (מראה) and "form" (תאר).[50] Also, Isaiah 35 (esp. vv. 1-6) employs a term for dryness (ציה) that associates with disability by highlighting the need for both conditions to be transformed.[51] So, while Schipper focuses on the Servant of Isaiah 53 – whose marred appearance "connote[s] an unspecified physical disability" – the broader context of Isaiah contributes to depicting the Servant as disabled.[52] In fact, the Servant's disabled body lies at the heart of a protracted argument in Isaiah 40-55 wherein corporeal space constitutes the means of discerning who/what may be likened to God

[49] Schipper associates cognitive impairment with the Servant in Isaiah 53 because similar imagery describes the "halfwit" king in the "substitute king ritual" known from Hittite and Assyrian texts, so *Disability*, 41-42.
[50] Schipper, *Disability*, 40-41.
[51] Schipper, 41.
[52] For the quote see Schipper, 40. Editorial limitations (*Disability*, 9) and scholarly debate over the unity of the Servant Songs (*Disability*, 6-7) restrict Schipper's focus to Isaiah 53.

(so Isa 40:18). To discern key elements of this argument I will analyze corporeality in Isaiah 40-55. But first, I summarize my work thus far.

Summation and Synthesis

In sum, Lefebvre's analytical fields, levels, and categories offer a robust means of applying spatial analysis to the questions of Isaiah 40:18. His identification of the body – corporeal space – as a key level for space-critical scholarship focuses the present analysis. To get at who or what may be likened to God, as Isaiah 40:18 asks, a critical-space approach attends to corporeal representations of characters in the broader context of Isaiah 40-55. Moreover, Schipper's cultural model of disability overlaps with Lefebvre's spatial categories, especially his notion of lived space. To put Schipper's disabilities studies to work in Lefebvre's spatial terms, analysis sensitive to the cultural model of disability entails attending to experiences of *lived* corporeal space at odds with normative *conceived* corporeal space. In the case of Isaiah 53, cultural disability is deeply encoded in the text's representation of the Servant. His bodily impairment impedes his cultural experience rendering him disabled. The following table highlights points of contact between the work of Lefebvre and Schipper.

Table 1: Comparison of Spatial Categories & Models of Disability

Lefebvre's Spatial Categories	**Schipper's Approaches to Disability Studies**
Perceived Space (*l'espace perçu*) Pertains to the body's various parts and sensory organs along with their collective work in perceiving the material world.	Medical Model Disability is an anomalous *bodily* condition isolated from experiences larger social structures.
Conceived Space (*l'espace conçu*) Pertains to the socially constructed concepts that associate with particular body parts (e.g., anger and a nose as in ויחר אפו [lit. "his nose became hot"]).	Social Model Disability is *socially* constructed discrimination against impaired persons.
Lived Space (*l'espace vécu*) Pertains to instances in which a given corporeal space is (re)appropriated by everyday users. It may bolster, challenge or undermine or conceived corporeal space.	Cultural Model Disability is an impaired person's *lived experience* of society.

Analysis of Corporeality in Isaiah 40-55: A Case Study

Prompted to identify bodily space – corporeality – as a key rhetorical device in Isaiah 40-55 and to appeal to this device in my reading of Isaiah 40:18, I now analyze corporeality in Isaiah 40-55 using spatial and disability studies. My analysis begins by charting all body parts and associated concepts in Isaiah 40-55. Doing so enables me to attend to character corporeality throughout Isaiah 40-55 and to analyze its (rhetorical) function. That analysis reveals a broader pattern in Isaiah 40-55, which represents characters using three types of corporeality. Adumbrating those types enables me to recognize and discuss

correspondences between the bodies of God and the Servant. I then re-read the bodies God and the Servant in Isaiah 40-55 with an eye toward spatiality and disability. Ultimately, I conclude that only one character may be likened to God in Isaiah 40-55 – the disabled Servant.

A Corporeal Lexicon of Isaiah 40-55

To determine the frequency and techniques with which Isaiah 40-55 portrays corporeality, I first provide the following lexicon of terms for body parts in this corpus. The result can be called Isaiah 40-55's "geography of the body." Terms appear in order of the Hebrew alphabet.[53] The concepts or *conceived* spaces associated with each *perceived* corporeal space also appear. These conceived spaces derive from evidence throughout the entire Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and scholarly discussions thereof.[54] Characters to whom each term is ascribed and source texts of each occurrence are also noted. A summary discussion of findings follows, leading to further analysis of striking examples of *lived* corporeal space.

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[53] Isaiah 1:4-6 assess the relative "soundness" (מתם) of the body politic of God's people "from the sole of the foot to the head," (מכף־רגל ועד־ראש) and modern medical practice assesses patients from head-to-foot making it tempting to organize the table from head (ראש) to foot (רגל), but such an approach would approximate a medical model which I aim to eschew here.

[54] Conceived spaces are synthetic summaries of the scholarly sources noted and discussions in standard lexicons, which include: Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907) = (BDB), David J. A. Clines ed., *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 9 Vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993-2016) = (*DCH*), Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johan J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. by Mervyn E. J. Richardson, 2 Vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001) = (*HALOT*), Morris Jastrow comp. *A Dicitonary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature with an Index of Scriptural Quotations* (London: Luzac; New Yourk: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903) = (Jastrow), G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, trans. by John T. Willis et al. 15 Vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-2006) = (*TDOT*), and R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 Vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) = (*TWOT*).

Table 2: Corporeal Spaces of Isaiah 40-55

Corporeal Space	Character	Source Text(s)
אֹזֶן Perceived: "Ear" Conceived: The locus of hearing central to biblical experience, "אֹזֶן" associates (in verbal roots) with heeding/obeying. Thus, the ear associates with obedience and understanding and may also associate with belonging and (moral) mobilization.[55]	Of The Deaf/ Unhearing Of Zion Of The Servant Of The Thirsting Of the Nations Of YHWH's People	Isa 42:20, 43:8, 48:8 Isa 49:20 Isa 50:3-4 Isa 55:3 Isa 42:23[56] Isa 51:4[57]
אַף* אָנַף Perceived: "Nose" Conceived: The locus of olfactory sense, "אַף" is envisaged as the locus of expressing anger (human and divine).[58]	Of YHWH /God[59] Of Kings & Queens	Isa 42:25, 48:9 Isa 49:23
בֶּטֶן Perceived: "Belly; Womb; Body" Conceived: A term for the ventral midsection (and contents) of men, women, and animals. By extension it refers to the body's generativity and is thus a denominative verb for "to be pregnant."	Of Unspecified Mother of Jacob Of The Servant Of Unspecified Mother	Isa 44:2, 44:24, 46:3, 48:8, Isa 49:1, 5 Isa 49:15

[55] *HALOT*, s.v. "אֹזֶן;" Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 369-77; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 122-33; Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 212-214; Rhiannon Graybill, "'Hear and Give Ear!': The Soundscape of Jeremiah," *JSOT* 40 (2016): 467-90; Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments: Mit zwei Anhängen neu herausgegeben von Bernd Janowski* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2010), 124-125.

[56] Denominative verbal form.

[57] Denominative verbal form.

[58] *HALOT*, s.v. "אַף II;" Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 214-215; Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:175; Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 396-401; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 94-96; Gerard van Groningen, "133 אָנַף (*'ānēp*), To Be Angry, To Be Displeased," in *TWOT*, 58; Ian D. Ritchie, "The Nose Knows: Bodily Knowing in Isaiah 11.3," *JSOT* 87 (2000): 59-73.

[59] Isa 42:24 identifies God as "יהוה," while Isa 48:1-2 uses "יהוה–אל." Each reference to God's body notes the name/title used in the text. However, no pattern was discerned among these names.

Conceptually it connotes the deepest feelings, passions, and thoughts (see Prov 18:8).[60]		
בֶּרֶךְ Perceived: "Knee" Conceived: Often conveying subservience, (i.e., bending the knee to Yhwh/God), knees also connote intimacy (Judg 16:19) and signal the obtaining of surrogate progeny (Gen 30:3, 50:23).[61]	Of All (people)	Isa 45:23
בָּשָׂר Perceived: "Flesh" Conceived: Associated with mortality, especially when contrasted with "spirit" (רוּחַ); "flesh" also appears repeatedly in the expression "flesh of your (pl.) foreskin" (בשׂר ערלתכם) connoting masculinity.[62]	Of People (generally) Food for the "Idol" Maker Of Oppressors	Isa 40:5-6, 49:26b Isa 44:16, 19 Isa 49:26a
גֵּו Perceived: "Back; body" Conceived: Lexicons differ on etymologies and semantics for this term. Due to limited perceived salience, the "back, body" associates with reducing something's salience (e.g., forgiveness reduces sin's salience by "casting sins behind the back") and thus	Of The Servant Of YHWH's People	Isa 50:6 Isa 51:23

[60] Since "פרי בטן" often associates with pregnancy (e.g., Gen 25:23-24, 30:2 38:27, Num 5:21-22, 27), its application to male bodies (Deut 7:13; 28:4, 11, 18, 53; 30:9; Mic 6:7; Ps 132:11) might best be rendered "fruit of the loins," rather than "fruit of the body." Further, weakness of the "belly" (בֶּטֶן) can connote weakness of the soul. BDB, s.v. "בֶּטֶן I;" *DCH* 2, s.v. "בֶּטֶן I;" *HALOT*, s.v. "בֶּטֶן I;" Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:173; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 68-82; Dorothea Erbele, "Gender Trouble in the Old Testament: Three Models of the Relation between Sex and Gender," *SJOT* 13 (1999): 131-41, here 138. On internal organs generally, see Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 190-231.

[61] While Gen 48:12 associates "knee" (בֶּרֶךְ) and "to bless" (ברך), standard lexica distinguish these homophones with independent entries. Compare Paul Rotenberry, "Blessing in the Old Testament: A Study of Genesis 12:3," *ResQ* 2 (1958): 32-36; Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Glossary of Old Syrian Volume I: ʔ-ḳ*, *LANE* 8/1 (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019), 124-25; *DCH* 2, s.v. "ברך" and "בֶּרֶךְ;" *HALOT*, s.v. "ברך" and "בֶּרֶךְ." On "knees" as a euphemism for a (surrogate) womb, see Hans-Friedemann Richter, "'Auf den Knien eines andern gebären'? (Zur Deutung von Gen 30.3 und 50.23)," *ZAW* 91 (1979): 436-37.

[62] For the flesh-spirit contrast, see Gen 6:3, Num 16:22, Isa 31:3. Also, Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:177-79; Erbele, "Gender Trouble," 132-26; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 203-219.

broadly associates with the concept of humiliation and curse.[63]		
זְרֹעַ/זְרוֹעַ Perceived: "Arm" Conceived: Conceptually identified with power, force/forcefulness, help/assistance, protection, and blessing.[64]	Of YHWH /God[65] Of The "Idol" Maker(s)	Isa 40:10-11, 48:14, 51:5 (2x's), 51:9, 52:10, 53:1 Isa 44:12
חֵיק Perceived: "Lap, Bosom; internal organs" Conceived: Associated with the tender care of a loved one (esp. a child, Ruth 4:16), this body part connotes affection.[66]	Of YHWH/God[67]	Isa 40:11
חֹצֶן Perceived: "Bosom (midsection of a body); fold of a garment" Conceived: This rare term associates with the "womb" and conveys compassion. Further, as the midsection of the body, which calls for protection, this term also conveys vulnerability.[68]	Of The Nations	Isa 49:22
יָד Perceived: "Hand" Conceived: Frequent in the Hebrew Bible and often used as the body's primary means of impacting the		Isa 40:2, 41:2, 45:11-

[63] *HALOT*, s.v. "גֵּו I;" H.-J. Fabry, "*geviyyāh*; *gûphāh*, *gav*, *gēv*, *gaph*," in *TDOT*, 2:433-38, esp. 437. Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 167-71. On body part salience, see Barbara Tversky, "Structures of Mental Spaces: How People Think about Space," *Environment and Behavior* 35 (2003): 66-80, esp. 67.

[64] *HALOT*, s.v. "זְרוֹעַ and זְרֹעַ;" Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 216-223; Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 251-63; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 171-73; Brent A. Strawn, "'With a Strong Hand and an Outstretched Arm': On the Meaning(s) of the Exodus Tradition(s)," in *Iconographic Exegesis o the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster, Brent A. Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 103-16.

[65] Isa 40:10 יהוה–אל; Isa 48:14, 51:3, 51:9, 52:10, 53:1 יהוה.

[66] On "חֵיק" as the "lower outer front of the body" and thus "lap," see *HALOT*, s.v. "חֵיק." On child care associated with "חֵיק," see and *DCH* 3, s.v. "חֵיק." On internal organs generally, see Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 190-231.

[67] Isa 40:10 יהוה–אל.

[68] *DCH* 3, s.v. "חֹצֶן I;" *HALOT*, s.v. "חֹצֶן;" Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 68-82, esp. 71-81.

external world, the "hand" is variously conceived. It most often associates with power (creative and destructive). It also associates with protection and blessing. By extension "יָד" can function as a proxy term for the self ("I").[69]	Of YHWH/God[70]	12, 48:13, 49:2, 49:22, 50:2, 50:11, 51:16-17 Isa 42:6, 43:13, 53:10
	Of The Servant	Isa 44:5 Isa 45:9 Isa 47:6
	Of Servant Jacob	Isa 47:14
	Of A Clay vessel (חמר)	Isa 51:18
	Of Daughter Babylon	Isa 51:22
	Of A Flame	Isa 51:23
	Of Zion/Jerusalem	
	Of YHWH's People	
	Of Oppressors of YHWH's People	
יָמִין Perceived: "Right hand, right side; south" Conceived: Highly symbolic, this part of the body often associates with high esteem, honor, or regard.	Of YHWH /God[72]	Isa 41:10, 48:13
	Of Servant Jacob/Israel	Isa 41:13
	Of The "Idol" Maker	Isa 44:20
	Of Cyrus	Isa 45:1
	Of Zion/Jerusalem	Isa 54:3

[69] *HALOT*, s.v. "יָד;" Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 216-223; Gieger, *Gottesräume*, 160-64; Stavrakopoulou, *God* 235-50; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 150-80; Strawn, "'With a Strong Hand and an Outstretched Arm,'" 103-16; idem. "Yahweh's Outstretched Arm Revisited Ichnographically," in *Iconography and Biblical Studies: Proceedings of the Iconography Sessions at the Joint EABS/SBL Conference, 22-26 July 2007, Vienna, Austria*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster and Rüdiger Schmitt, AOAT 361 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009), 163-211; Stig Norin, "Die Hand Gottes im Alten Testament," in *La Main de Dieu. Die Hand Gottes*, ed. René Kieffer and Jan Bergman, WUNT 94 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 49-63; Anna Maria Schwemer, "Gottes hand und die Propheten: Zum Wandel der Metapher ››Hand Gottes‹‹ in frühjüdischer Zeit," in *La Main de Dieu. Die Hand Gottes*, ed. René Kieffer and Jan Bergman, WUNT 94 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 65-85; Andreas Wagner, "Das synthetische Bedeutungsspektrum hebräischer Körperteilbezeichnungen," in *Synthetische Körperauffassung im Hebräischen und den Sprachen der Nachbarkulturen*, ed. Katrin Müller and Andreas Wagner, AOAT 416 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 1-11. On "יָד" as a proxy term for the self ("I"), see Andreas Wagner, "Körperbegriffe als Stellvertreterausdücke der Person in den Psalmen," in *Beten und Bekennen: Über Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2008), 289-317, esp. 293-299.

[70] Isa 40:1-2, 48:1-2, 49:22, 50:10, 51:15 יהוה–אל; Isa 41:4, 45:11, 49:1, 50:1, 51:17 יהוה.

[72] Isa 41:10 אל, Isa 48:13 יהוה–אל.

It also signifies dexterity. Its use as an orientation term is extended but ancient.[71]		
כַּף Perceived: "Palm, hand; sole (of foot)" Conceived: Variously used but often associated with notions of (military) power.[73]	Of YHWH /God[74] Of Trees of the Field	Isa 49:16 Isa 55:12
לֵב, לֵבָב Perceived: "Heart" Conceived: Variously conceived, this term associates with a broad complement of interior capacities and dispositions including the mind, intellect, reason, will, select emotions, and courage. Accordingly, it is identified as the "central organ," and it expresses strong emotions such as joy and grief; but it is not the "seat of love" in biblical thought.[75]	Of Jerusalem/Zion Of YHWH /God[76] Of Jacob/Israel Of The "Idol(s)" Of The "Idol" Maker(s) Of Daughter Babylon Of People with the Torah[77] Of Transgressors Of The Stubborn	Isa 40:2, 49:21 Isa 41:22 Isa 42:25 Isa 44:18 Isa 44:19-20 Isa 47:7, 47:10 Isa 51:7 Isa 46:8 Isa 46:12

[71] *DCH* 4, s.v. "יָמִין;" *HALOT*, s.v. "יָמִין;" Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 216-223; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 158-61; Nicolas Wyatt, "The Vocabulary and Neurology of Orientation: The Ugaritic and Hebrew Evidence," in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture, Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C.L. Gibson*, ed. N. Wyatt, W.G.E. Watson, and J.B. Lloyd, UBL 12 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996): 351-80; idem. *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East*, BibSem 85 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 35-36.

[73] In addition to use in military scenes (e.g., Judg 6:12-14), frequent parallels with hand (יד) suggest notions of power; *DCH* 4, s.v. "כַּף I;" *HALOT* s.v. "כַּף."

[74] Isa 49:18 יהיה.

[75] The Hebrew Bible's concept of "heart" (לבב) is often contrasted with western concepts of the heart. For discussions see *HALOT*, s.v. "לֵב" and "לֵבָב;" *DCH* 4, s.v. "לֵב;" Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:172; Wolff, *Anthropologie*, 75-101; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 41-55; Geiger, *Gottesräume*, 148-55; Janowski, *Anthropologie*, 138-57; Katrin Müller, "Lieben ist nicht gleich lieben: Zur kognitiven Konzeption von Liebe im Hebräischen," in *Göttliche Körper – Göttliche Gefühle: Was leisten anthropomorphe und anthropopathische Götterkonzepete im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament?* ed. Andreas Wagner. OBO 270 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 219-37; Mark S. Smith, "The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes from Anthropology and Psychobiology," *JBL* 117 (1998): 427-36; Hans-Georg Wünch, "The Strong and the Fat Heart in the Old Testament: Does God Hearten the Heart?" *OTE* 30 (2017): 165-88. On internal organs generally, see Stavrakopoulou, *God*,190-231.

[76] Isa 41:21 יהיה.

[77] NB: this character is also referred to as "those who encounter the 'reproach of man'" (חרפת אנוש).

לְחִי Perceived: "Jaw(bone), Chin, Cheek" Conceived: Associated with instrumental violence (Judg 15), attraction (Song 1:10, 5:13), and sacrifice (e.g., Deut 18:3), this term may also connote low-ness in association with the lowest part of the face.[78]	Of The Servant	Isa 50:6
לָשׁוֹן Perceived: "Tongue" Conceived: Associated with the sense of taste, this term is used for language and speech construction, and extends to signify distinctive cultural traits.[79]	Of the Poor and Needy Of All (people) Of The Servant Of Zion/Jerusalem	Isa 41:17 Isa 45:23 Isa 50:4 Isa 54:17
מַעֶה Perceived: "Entrails, Stomach; Womb" Conceived: A term for internal organs, often the uterus; but "מעה" is also attributed to men as a life-giving organ (e.g., 2 Sam 16:11). It connotes the seat of emotions and excitement.[80]	Of Jacob/Israel Of The Servant's Mother	Isa 48:19 Isa 49:1
מָתְנַיִם Perceived: "Hips, Loins, Genitals; sinews?" Conceived: Always dual (thus not waist) this term refers to the body's midsection and by extension it serves as a locus of power or strength. The expression "loins girded" (מתנים הגרים) connotes preparation for physical exertion (i.e., being on guard).[81]	Of Kings	Isa 45:1
נָפֶשׁ Perceived: "Throat, neck; soul"	Of YHWH's People Of The Thirsting	Isa 51:23

[78] BDL, s.v. "לְחִי I;" *DCH* 4, s.v. "לְחִי I." If the place name Lehi (לְחִי) is related, then "low-ness" is further confirmed since Lehi (לְחִי) is "in the lowland area of Judah, near Philistine territory," *DCH* 4, s.v. "לְחִי II."

[79] *HALOT*, s.v. "לָשׁוֹן;" Wolff, *Anthropologie*, 127.

[80] BDL, s.v. "מַעֶה;" *DCH* 5, s.v. "מַעֶה;" *HALOT*, s.v. "מַעֶה;" Erbele, "Gender Trouble," 138-39; Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:173; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 68-82. On internal organs generally, see Stavrakopoulou, *God*,190-231.

[81] *HALOT*, s.v. "מָתְנַיִם;" Victor P. Hamilton, "1267 מתן (*mtn*). Assumed root of 1267a מָתְנַיִם (*motnayim*) Loins, Hips," in *TWOT*, 536-37; Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 91-147. On "מתנים" as "sinews," see Moshe Held, "Studies in Comparative Semitic Lexicography," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 21, 1965*, ed. Hans G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen, AS 16 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 395-406, esp. 405-06. On "loins girded" (מתנים הגרים), see Katherine Low, "Implications Surrounding Girding the Loins in Light of Gender, Body, and Power," *JSOT* 36 (2011): 3-30.

Conceived: Variously conceived but most associated with life, being, and identity. Also connotes the self ("I").[82]		Isa 55:2-3[83]
עַיִן Perceived: "Eye(s)" Conceived: A "primary noun," this locus of sight can connote the (erotic) gaze and the presence or lack of visual beauty (e.g., Leah's lackluster appearance Gen 29:16-18). It also associates with knowing/recognizing something and, in the case of God, divine presence, sight, and communication. In some instances, it connotes the self ("I").[84]	Of Jacob/Israel Of The Blind Of YHWH /God[85] Of The "Idol(s)" Of The Servant Of Zion Of YHWH's People Of Sentinels[86] Of The Nations	Isa 40:26 Isa 42:7, 43:8 Isa 43:4 Isa 44:18 Isa 49:5 Isa 49:18 Isa 51:6 Isa 52:8 Isa 52:10
עֹרֶף Perceived: "Nape/back of Neck" Conceived: Associated with prideful contentiousness, to show the nape or back of the neck indicates disrespect and stubborn rejection.[87]	Of House of Jacob/Israel	Isa 48:4
פֶּה Perceived: "Mouth" Conceived: Broadly symbolic due to the mouth's multifunctionality, the Hebrew Bible associates this space with speech (forceful and incompetent),	Of YHWH /God[89]	Isa 40:5, 45:23, 48:3, 55:11

[82] Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:170-81; Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 401-6; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 56-67. For a recent study of the distinction between "נפשות" and the body, see Richard C. Steiner, *Disembodied Souls: The* Nefesh *in Israel and Kindred Spirits in the Ancient Near East, with an Appendix on the Katumuwa Inscription*, ANEM 11 (Atlanta: SBL 2015), 1-127. Still, Steiner (74) associates Isa 55:2-3 with life (היים). On connoting the self ("I") in Psalms, see Wagner, "Körperbegriffe," 307-312.

[83] *HALOT*, s.v. "נֶפֶשׁ" proposes "throat" in Isa 55:2 while English translations variously propose "soul" or "you/yourself." Without a body part in a parallel line (*cf.* Isa 51:23) translation values remain contested.

[84] *HALOT*, s.v. "עַיִן;" Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:174-75; Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 211-212; Gieger, *Gottesräume*, 168-75; Stavrakopoulou, *God* 377-89; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 103-121; Ahmad M. Mansour, Daniel Gold, Haytham I. Salti, and Zaher M. Sbeity, "The Eye in the Old Testament and Talmud," *Survey of Ophthalmology* 49 (2004): 446-53. On "עַיִן" connoting the self ("I"), see Wagner, "Körperbegriffe," 304-307.

[85] Isa 43:3 יהוה אלהיך.

[86] Only once are "Sentinels" referred to in Isaiah 40-55.

[87] *HALOT*, s.v. "עֹרֶף II;" Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 91-93;

[89] Isa 40:5, 45:24, 55:8 יהוה, Isa 48:1-2 יהוה–אל.

eating, laughing, and kissing. It also represents confrontation and liminality.[88]	Of The Servant Of the Prophet[90] Of Kings	Isa 49:2, 53:7 (2x's), 53:9 Isa 51:16 Isa 52:15
פָּנֶה, פָּנִים Perceived: "Face" A complex composite space consisting of other spaces including the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, lips, and chin. Conceived: Conceptually complex (lexicon entries run for pages) the face expresses emotion, indicates life, signifies spatial/directional orientation, and represents relationship(s) with other perceived spaces and power. Broadly, "פָּנִים" is conceived as the spatial intersection of personhood (emotions and body), place(ment), and power. In the case of God, it conveys relationship and communication. At times it connotes the self ("I").[91]	Of The Servant Of YHWH/God[92]	Isa 50:6-7, 53:2 Isa 54:8
צַוָּאר Perceived: "Neck" Conceived: Primarily represents pride and stubbornness, which calls for subjugation or force (e.g., Jos 10:24); this term also conveys beauty (Song 1:10, 7:4) and vulnerability (Isa 8:8).[93]	Of Zion	Isa 52:2

[88] BDB, s.v. "פֶּה;" *HALOT*, s.v. "פֶּה;" Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 134-48; Wolff, *Anthropologie*, 126-27; Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exodus: How It Happened and Why It Matters* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), 126-27. Expressions like "heavy of mouth" (כבד–פה Exod 4:10) connote speech incompetence. Expressions like "edges of a sword" (חרב פיות, Prov 5:4) combine confrontation and liminality.

[90] Commentators differ on the identity of the character in Isa 51:16 who is ascribed a mouth. For some it is the servant, for others it is the (captive) people of Israel, for others it is both simultaneously, and there are still other readings. For examples and discussions, see Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 363-64; Childs, *Isaiah*, 403-405; Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1995), 145-148; Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *Reading Isaiah: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the Old Testament (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2016), 241; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, revised edition, WBC 25 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 767-773.

[91] BDB, s.v. "פָּנֶה;" *HALOT*, s.v. "פָּנֶה;" *DCH* 6, s.v. "פָּנִים;" Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 208-2010; Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:175; Janowski, *Anthropologie*, 143-44; Stavrakopoulou, *God* 309-23; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 85-91. On "פָּנֶה" connoting the self ("I"), see Wagner, "Körperbegriffe," 299-304.

[92] Isa 54:8 יהוה.

[93] *HALOT*, s.v. "צַוָּאר;" Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 91-93;

רֹאשׁ Perceived: "Head" Conceived: A gesture of the head expresses various meanings in the Hebrew Bible associating the head with (potential) corporeal action. Other associated concepts include height, elevation, intensification, aggrandizement, honor, and vulnerability. Occasionally connotes the self ("I").[94]	Of The Ransomed of YHWH	Isa 51:11
רֶגֶל Perceived: "Foot/Feet" Conceived: References to foot/feet connote (the capacity for) mobility, which may elicit suspicion. Further, this term can represent control, power, lordship, and presence (of power). At times it may be conceived (euphemistically) as the pubic region or genitals (Exod 4:25, Isa 6:2).[95]	Of The Righteous One from the East Of Zion Of A Messenger	Isa 41:2-3 Isa 49:23 Isa 52:7
רַחַמִּים ,רֶחֶם Perceived: "Womb; compassion" Conceived: Primarily the locus of gestation, the extended term (רַחַמִּים) connotes compassion and mercy, which can associate with male/masculine characters (e.g., Joseph in Gen 43:30).[96]	Of Unspecified Mother of Jacob	Isa 46:3
שֵׂיבָה Perceived: "Gray Hair" (of the head) Conceived: The Hebrew Bible conceives of gray hair as a sign of old age.[97]	Of Jacob/Israel	Isa 46:4

[94] *HALOT*, s.v. "רֹאשׁ I;" Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:174; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 83-84. "Head" (רֹאשׁ) also occurs in Isaiah 40-55 with a metaphorical, non-corporeal sense (i.e., "beginning, top"). On "רֹאשׁ" connoting the self ("I"), see Wagner, "Körperbegriffe," 312-314.

[95] *HALOT*, s.v. "רֶגֶל;" Cornelius, "The Study of the Old Testament and the Material Imagery of the Ancient Near East, with a Focus on the Body Parts of the Deity," 195-228, esp. 223-26; Janowski, *Anthropologie*, 138-45; Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 181-202. For further discussion, see Stavrakopoulou, *God*, 50-88. On the foot motif in Iron Age Arabian glyptic, see Dominika Majchrzak, "Some Thoughts on the Foot Motif from the Iron Age Southeastern Arabian Peninsula, in Reference to a Small Finds Assemblage from Saruq al-Hadid, Dubai, United Arab Emirates," *ANES* 59 (2022): 39-54.

[96] Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:173; and Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 68-82. Janowski, *Anthropologie*, 138-43, 157-59. On Semitic cognates of "רחם" that convey compassion, mercy, see *HALOT*, s.v. "רֶחֶם," and "רַחֲמִים;" Erbele, "Gender Trouble," 136-37, nn. 25-26.

[97] On the multi-faceted symbolism of (non-gray) hair, see Staubli and Schroer, *Body Symbolism*, 96-102.

שׁוֹק Perceived: "Thigh; genitals?" Conceived: Often a designated (priestly) portion of a sacrificial offering, this term also associates with vulnerability (Deut 28:35, Judg 15:8, Isa 47:2) and erotic imagery (Song 5:15) suggesting it may be a euphemism for genitalia.[98]	Of Daughter Babylon	Isa 47:2
שׁעל Perceived: "(hollow of the) Hand" Conceived: This rare term associates with a hollowed hand grasping something with dexterity, connoting creativity.[99]	Of YHWH /God[100]	Isa 40:12

To summarize the foregoing table, I first note that Isaiah 40-55 mentions numerous body parts. When considered together, a nearly complete image of the human body emerges.[101] Second, Isaiah 40-55 refers to multiple, different bodies. Thus, as Isa 1:4-6 anticipates, corporeality is important in Isaiah, especially chapters 40-55. Third, when Isaiah 40-55 aims to anthropomorphize a figure, it tends to ascribe multiple body parts.[102] Finally, the bodies of characters in Isaiah 40-55 can be classified in three patterns of lived space, each calling for discussion.

[98] "שׁוֹק" designates (priestly) portions of sacrifices in Exod 29:22, 27; Lev 7:32-34, 8:25-26, 9:21, 10:14-15; Num 6:20, 18:18. On biblical euphemisms for genitalia, see Sharon R. Keller, "Aspects of Nudity in the Old Testament," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 12 (1993): 32-36, esp. 34; and S. H. Smith, "'Heel' and 'Thigh': The Concept of Sexuality in the Jacob-Esau Narratives," *VT* 40 (1990): 464-73.

[99] "שׁעל" only appears in 1Kgs 20:10, Ezk 13:19, and Isa 40:12 and also conveys the notion of a "handful" (*DCH* 8, s.v. "שׁעל"). For association of "שׁעל" with creativity in Mishnaic Hebrew, see Jastrow, s.v. "שׁעל."

[100] Isa 40:10 יהוה–אל.

[101] Some corporeal terms found elsewhere in Isaiah but omitted in Isaiah 40-55 include: "shoulder" (שֶׁכֶם, Isa 9:3, 9:5, 10:27, 14:25, 22:22, 37:36), "breast" (שַׁד, Isa 28:9, 32:12), "loins" (חֲלָצַיִם, Isa 5:27, 11:5, 32:11), "side" (אֲצָל, Isa 19:19) and "buttocks" (שֵׁת, Isa 20:4). For a comprehensive list of terms for body parts in the Old Testament, see Andreas Wagner, *Gottes Körper: Zur alttestamentlichen Vorstellung der Menschengestaltigkeit Gottes* (Gütersloher: Gütersloher, 2010), 104-106.

[102] The anthropomorphic "Idols" (Isa 44:18) have eyes and a heart. Similarly, Zion has eyes, ears, feet, a tongue, a neck, and a heart. And Daughter Babylon has hands, a heart and thighs. By contrast the mountain of Isa 42:11 has a "top" (ראשׁ) not a head. The street of Isa 51:20 has an "end" (ראשׁ) not a head. The pot in Isa 45:9 has "handles" (ידים) not hands. And the fire in Isa 47:14 has "power" (יד) not a hand.

The first pattern of lived space associated with bodies in Isaiah 40-55 I call *simple body space*. This pattern ascribes a single body part to a character, which establishes simple expectations for readers. In lived reality, these bodies will either function or not. Expectations are simple and either undermined or reinforced. For example, the Deaf/Unhearing character (Isa 42:20, 43:8, 48:8) only has ears, but never hears. Alternatively, the Unspecified Mother character only has a womb (בֶּטֶן, Isa 44.2, 42; 46:3, 48:8; רֶחֶם, Isa 46:3; and מֵעֶה, Isa 49:1), and, as mother, has a functioning womb. Simple body space is the most common pattern of lived corporeal space in Isaiah 40-55, but this pattern does not associate with God or the Servant.[103] Accordingly, it receives no further attention in the present discussion. Still, its presence indicates the diversity of corporeal spatial rhetoric found in Isaiah 40-55.

The second pattern of lived space that I discern among the bodies in Isaiah 40-55 I call *straw body space* because it appears in straw-man arguments. In this pattern adversarial characters have two (2) or three (3) body parts. Then, these bodies are damaged, rejected, or compromised. Thus, a foe's body – their lived corporeal space – is feebly constructed and (rhetorically) foiled.[104] Like the previous pattern, neither God nor the Servant's body falls into this pattern in Isaiah 40-55, however, the bodies of "Idols" and "Idol" Makers do. This disjunction is noteworthy. Readers regularly recognize that "Idols"

[103] Characters exemplifying "simple body space" include: the Ransomed of Yhwh, the Poor and Needy, the Thirsting, the Deaf/Unhearing, Unspecified Mother. A potential outlier of the pattern might be the "Blind" characters who only have eyes (עַיִן Isa 42:7, 43:8) and might come to see in Isa 42:7. But the language is a promise. They seem to remain blind.

[104] Characters exemplifying the "straw body space" pattern include: Oppressors, Kings & Queens [the Royal Body], Daughter Babylon, Cyrus/The Righteous One of the East, "Idols," and "Idol" Makers.

and "Idol" Makers are objects of divine comparison in the rhetoric of Isaiah 40-55.[105] Yet, my analysis shows that the bodies of the "Idols" and "Idol" Makers diverge so significantly from the body of God that comparisons limp. Isaiah 40-55 represents "Idols" and "Idol" Makers with very few body parts while God's body is highly articulated. Accordingly, to compare God to the "Idols" or "Idol" Makers in Isaiah 40-55 (as Isa 40:18 suggests), is to encounter a straw man argument. The bodies of the "Idols" and "Idol" Makers differ profoundly from the body of God.

The third pattern of lived corporeal space in Isaiah 40-55 I call *complex body space*. Characters associated with this pattern have more than three body parts and some body parts are repeatedly attributed to them. Accordingly, the bodies of these characters exhibit greater diversity and robustness than those associated with previous patterns. Furthermore, characters with complex bodies associate with multiple conceptual spaces conveyed by their many body parts. As a result, these characters tend to be substantial and rhetorically resilient. They are not subject to straw-man arguments. Isaiah 40-55 portrays no more than six characters using this pattern.[106] Important for present purposes, God and the Servant are preeminent figures represented with complex body space. Their body parts are numerous and diverse, even when compared to other characters with complex bodies. Indeed, the only body that Isaiah 40-55 portrays more frequently and thoroughly than the Servant's belongs to God.

[105] For a dissertation-length study, see Hendrik Carel Spykerboer, "The Structure and Composition of Deutero-Isaiah: With Special Reference to the Polemics against Idolatry" (Ph.D. diss., University of Groningen, 1976). For a recent, insightful discussion, see MacDonald, "Monotheism and Isaiah," 52-54, 59.

[106] Other than God and the Servant, the characters with complex body space in Isaiah 40-55 include: the People of Yhwh/Torah, All People(s)/Nations, Zion/Jerusalem, and the (House of) Jacob/Israel.

As the foregoing analysis of character corporeality in Isaiah 40-55 shows, this portion of Isaiah frequently represents bodies and refers to numerous body parts. Moreover, spatial analysis of these bodies and their parts shows that these bodies can be classified in three patterns – simple bodies, straw bodies, and complex bodies – each having a rhetorical role in Isaiah 40-55. Furthermore, when it comes to God's body in Isaiah 40-55, its complexity has only one plausible comparand – the body of the Servant. Consequently, in the following section, I compare the bodies of these two characters in greater detail with an eye toward their able-ness.

Re-reading the Complex Bodies of God and the Servant in Isa 40-55

To compare the bodies of God and the Servant in Isaiah 40-55 first calls for listing the parts ascribed to each character. God's body, in Isaiah 40-55, consists of a face (פָּנִים [פָּנֶה]; Isa 54:8), eyes (עַיִן; Isa 43:4), a nose (אַף* אָנָף; Isa 42:25, 48:9), a mouth (פֶּה; Isa 40:5, 45:23, 48:3, 55:11), an arm (זְרוֹעַ/זְרֹעַ; Isa 40:10-11, 48:14, 51:5 [2x's], 51:9, 52:10, 53:1), a hand or hands (יָד; Isa 40:2, 41:2, 45:11-12, 48:13, 49:2, 49:22, 50:2, 50:11, 51:16-17), a palm (כַּף; Isa 49:16), a cupped or hollowed hand (שׁוּעַל; Isa 40:12), a right hand (יָמִין; Isa 41:10, 48:13), a heart (לֵב, לֵבָב; Isa 41:22) and a lap or bosom (חֵיק; Isa 40:11). The Servant, in Isaiah 40-55, has a face (פָּנִים [פָּנֶה]; Isa 50:6-7, 53:2), eyes (עַיִן; Isa 49:5), ears (אֹזֶן; Isa 50:3-4), a mouth (פֶּה; Isa 49:2, 53:7 [2x's], 53:9), a tongue (לָשׁוֹן; Isa 50:4), a jaw(bone), chin, cheek (לֶחִי; Isa 50:6), a hand/hands (יָד; Isa 42:6, 43:13, 53:10), a right hand (יָמִין; Isa 41:13), a back (גֵּו; Isa 50:6), and a belly/womb (בֶּטֶן; Isa 49:1, 49:5).

Commonalities between the bodies of God and the Servant in Isaiah 40-55 are many. Theirs are the two most articulated bodies in the corpus with God's body having eleven (11) different parts and the Servant's ten (10). Half of the Servant's body parts are also ascribed to God. Their common parts include a face, eyes, a mouth, hands, and a right hand. A face is only ascribed to these two characters in the entire corpus of Isaiah 40-55. And only these characters repeatedly have hands in Isaiah 40-55. Also, God and the Servant are the only complex characters with mouths.

Differences between the bodies of God and the Servant also merit attention. Body parts not shared between them seem to highlight the Servant's disability and seemingly deny God's disability. For example, the Servant's tongue in Isa 50:4, while capable of functioning in an able-bodied fashion, only does so with God's help. The same is true of the Servant's ear (Isa 50:4-5). Given that, in Isaiah 50, the Servant depends on God's strength to function in these able-bodied ways, one wonders whether the Servant's ability to take blows on the back (גֵּו) and plucks of the beard (Isa 50:6) also requires divine strength. While these differences may seem to distinguish between God and the Servant, they can also be read as overlaps. That is, while the Servant is disabled, God provisions the Servant's able-ness. As such, their bodies function in an interdependent, inverse relationship. Considering the Servant's disability, the comparability of the body parts ascribed to God and the Servant, and the inverse relationship between these bodies, the question emerges: how does Isaiah 40-55 render God's able-ness vis-à-vis the body?

God's relative able-ness in Isaiah 40-55 can be discerned in two ways. First, while most corporeal imagery associated with God in Isaiah 40-55 highlights able-ness, some (albeit limited) disability imagery does

appear. On this point, the nose again helps. In Isaiah 42:25 and 43:1 the lived space of God's nose challenges its conceived space. Based on the prior discussion, we know that such discrepancy suggests disability. In Isaiah 42:25, God's nose is enflamed (חמה אפו) – a variation of the expression for wrath or anger.[107] So, God's anger is kindled in this verse. Yet, it leads almost immediately to redemption (גאל) in Isaiah 43:1. To represent the lived space of God's body this way raises questions about its ability, at least as far as God's nose is concerned. Why does God's anger lead to redemption and not devastation, as the concept of an enflamed nose would have readers expect? In light of the Servant's disability and the comparability of his body with God's, readers can conclude that God's nose is a corporeal space of limited ability. At minimum, Isaiah 42:25-43:1 suggests that God accepts the lived experience of a disabled person. His body performs as though impaired since his nose becomes enflamed, but brings forth redemption rather than anger.

A second way in which Isaiah 40-55 portrays God's able-ness appears in the inverse relationship between God's body and that of the Servant. This inverse relationship highlights what Rebecca Raphael calls "hyper-acute ability."[108] Hyper-acute ability refers to capacities that exceed typical human ability. According to Raphael, biblical prophets and the Servant in Isaiah 42 are "hyper-sensitive to the divine," which renders them more like disabled persons than able-bodied persons because they live a marginalized social experience that leads to

[107] As noted above, similar expressions include "חרה אף" (lit. "the blazing nose") and "ויחר אפו" (lit. "his nose became hot").

[108] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 122-23.

isolation.[109] In the case of God, hyper-acute ability manifests when enabling the Servant to endure suffering. Moreover, throughout Isaiah 40-55, the portrayal of God's body emphasizes hyper-acute ability. Of note, in this corpus, God frequently has a hand (יד), arm (זרע/זרוע), and right hand (ימן). The conceived spaces associated with these terms emphasize physical and political strength, power, and honor. That is, these body parts convey increased ability. And the sheer number of times these terms are predicated of God is striking. Eighteen (18) times God has a hand, arm, or right hand in Isaiah 40-55. By contrast all other characters in the corpus combined only have hands or arms thirteen (13) times. These terms *and* their repetition emphasize God's exaggerated power to the point that we discern hyper-acute ability. The bodies of all other characters in Isaiah 40-55 cannot, vis-à-vis their bodies, collectively manifest the same power. So, while God's hyper-acute ability contributes to enabling the Servant, it also isolates God among the other characters of Isaiah 40-55. Because of that isolation – an isolation characteristic of both hyper-acute ability and disability – God may be likened to the disabled Servant.

Conclusions

At the outset of this study, I suggested that, by applying a non-Christological, ideological approach to the questions of Isaiah 40:18 – "To whom might you liken God? And, what likeness might you set up for him?" – it is possible to formulate a response similar to those arrived at in Christological readings of this verse, namely, God may be likened to the Servant (at least in Isaiah 40-55). By synthesizing Henri Lefebvre's critical space theory and Jeremy Schipper's work in

[109] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 122-125. To further exemplify Raphael's claim, elite athletes can be identified as hyper-able persons yet, their mental illness due to isolation (among other things) is increasingly observed. For more, see Robert J. Schinke, et al. "International Society of Sport Psychology Position Stand: Athletes' Mental Health, Performance, and Development," *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 16 (2018): 622-39.

disability studies, I advanced a mixed-method, ideological approach. My approach helped me identify bodies (corporeal space) as a key domain of overlap between critical space theory and disability studies. By focusing on this domain and relying on my mixed-methods approach, I indicated the mutual complementarity of spatial and disability studies. Further, I uncovered a rhetorical strategy present throughout Isaiah 40-55 that relies on character embodiment. Some characters have simple bodies. Some have "straw" bodies. And some have complex bodies. Ultimately, I have shown that, when it comes to comparing God to other embodied characters in Isaiah 40-55, the only apt comparison is with the disabled Servant. Thus, to identify and analyze bodies and their parts in Isaiah 40-55 as perceived, conceived, and lived spaces promises new answers to the questions of Isaiah 40:18. And these answers stand to be informed by the corpus' spatial rhetoric.

Based on my findings we can further recognize that, even while Isaiah 40-55 advances what scholars identify as exclusive monotheism, the bond between God and the community of Israel – vis-à-vis the person of the Servant – remains intimate. At the level of bodily representation, the Servant's body draws attention. It appears disabled. And yet, it is precisely through a parallel with God's body – the body of a would-be transcendent deity – that the full meaning of the Servant's body comes into focus. God, thanks to a bodily affinity with the Servant, remains profoundly immanent to Israel. In this conundrum we encounter a pattern that "rhymes" with a broader biblical picture of Israel's God. For all God's wonder, power and grandeur, there remains an avenue of access for Israel to God. And that avenue of access often proves unlikely, such as a disabled Servant whose likeness resembles God.