

Revisiting the Canon Debates and Beyond with Reference to the East-Asian Canonics¹⁾

Jungwoo Kim*

1. Introduction

Cheongwon Youshin (靑原 惟信), a famous Buddhist monk in the Tang dynasty, described in his famous *Gatha* (偈頌)²⁾ his pilgrimage of enlightenment as follows: “Before I started my contemplation thirty years ago, “to see a mountain, it is a mountain” (見山是山); “to see a river, it is a river” (見水是水). Later after learning from my benevolent teacher, “to see a mountain, it is not mountain” (見山不是山); “to see a river,

* Director of IKTINOS

1) This paper was originally given at the workshop co-organized by CISMOR and IKTINOS: *Canon: A Study of Ancient Writings' Ideology* (Jan. 15, 2022).

The term “canonics” which stands for 經學 in this paper means, “a theory about canon,” based on the English noun “canonic” which includes meaning such as “a scheme or system of logical rules, treatise of rules” (Oxford English Dictionary), just like the terms “physics” and “metaphysics”. Professor Tai-il Wang proposes to translate ‘경학(經學)’ as “Scripture-ology” in his recent article, “Scripture-ology and Scriptural Performance in Canonical Criticism and the Theistic Confucian Thought,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Korea*, ed. Won W. Lee (Oxford University Press, 2022), 53-66.

2) “*Gāthā* is a Sanskrit term for ‘song’ or ‘verse,’ especially referring to any poetic meter which is used in legends, and is not part of the Vedas but peculiar to either Epic Sanskrit or to Prakrit. The word is originally derived from the Sanskrit/Prakrit root *gai*, which means, ‘to speak, sing, recite or extol,’ cognate to the Avestan term *gatha*” (Wikipedia).

it is a river” (見水不是水). Now as I am enlightened, “to see a mountain, it ought to be mountain” (見山祇是山); “to see a river, it ought to be river” (見水祇是水). Dear friends, what is the same and what is different among these three views?”³⁾

Applying this *Gatha* to the history of biblical interpretation over the last 2,000 years, we may summarize as follows: In the pre-critical period, “to see canon, it is canon (見經是經); to see culture, it is culture (見文是文).” In the historical-critical period, “to see canon, it is culture (見經是文); to see culture, it is canon (見文是經).” Now as we are enlightened in the post-critical period, “to see canon, it is to be canon (見經祇是經); to see culture, it is to be culture (見文祇是文).”⁴⁾ Dear friends, what is the same and different among these three views?

Historical criticism as an heir of the Enlightenment made a Copernican paradigm shift of sorts, for the biblical canon was seen as mere cultural products. J. G. Eichhorn, recognized as the founder of modern historical criticism, proposed to abandon the position of traditional theological interpretations that led to the timeless truth in the Bible, in order to find out the original, historical meaning behind it. In implementing this proposal, he argued that “it would have been desirable if *one had never even used the term canon*” (emphasis mine).⁵⁾ For Eichhorn, the concept of canon was *not inherent* in the original biblical writings but was *imparted* later by the faith community to impose authoritative normativity on their religious traditions. Therefore, in order to appreciate the proper meaning, we have

3) *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp Sequel* (『續傳燈錄』), trans. R. S. Whitefield (BoD, 2015).

4) In Korean the classic Chinese term 祇 is pronounced either *gi* (기) or *ji* (지), depending on the meaning, and I think this phrase means “ought to” in the present context.

5) J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 3rd ed. 1780-3; 4th ed. 1820-24), vol. 1, 106, cited in B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 36.

to first analyze the “original documents” behind the present shape of the canon to be able to find out “the original historical meaning.”⁶⁾

About 200 years after Eichhorn’s pioneering work, J. Barr made a famous statement on canon that “the time of the Bible was a time when the Bible was not yet there.”⁷⁾ This was a wordplay on two contrasting concepts on the Bible, with “the time of the Bible” referring to the time of the process of its shaping and “a time when the Bible was not yet there” indicating the time of canon fixed later by the community of faith. To put it simply, there was no concept of canon during the process of the stabilization of the Bible. Barr’s motto can also be applied to the formation process of the New Testament: “In the New Testament scripture is used again and again as a demonstration, as confirmatory evidence, as argumentative material, but there is no evidence that it was thought of, or could be thought of, as the ultimate criterion of Christian truth.”⁸⁾ In other words, “the Bible is the product of tradition, editing, and revision on the part of community.”⁹⁾ In sum, according to the perspective of the historical criticism represented by the likes of Eichhorn and Barr, canon is not an innate concept, but a secondary concept imposed by later generations of the community. That is, “canon

6) S. B. Chapman argues that the first attack to the canonicity of the Bible from historical criticism began with J. S. Semler, who asserted that “biblical canon is an assault of the church to the freedom of individuals” in his book, *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon*, (Halle, 1771-76). S. B. Chapman, “Book Review. George Aichele, *The Control of Biblical Meaning: Canon as Semiotic Mechanism* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001),” *Theology Today* 59 (2002), 113-15. We may add that there is no section on canon in O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament Introduction* (Oxford & New York, 1965).

7) James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 1.

8) Ibid., 20.

9) Ibid., 28.

is culture (經是文), and culture is canon (文是經).”

In the academic milieu of the denial and deconstruction of the concept of canon in biblical studies, B. S. Childs diagnosed that “there was something fundamentally wrong with the foundations of the biblical discipline.”¹⁰⁾ So, he proposed to “completely rethink” the relationship between the historical-critical study and its theological use as religious literature within the faith community. He pointed out that the “sterile impasse” of historical criticism was fundamentally caused by its neglect of the canonical dimension of the Bible:

The Modern hermeneutical impasse which has found itself unable successfully to bridge the gap between the past and the present, has arisen in large measure from its disregard of the canonical shaping. The usual critical method of biblical exegesis is, first, to seek to restore an original historical setting by stripping away those very elements which constitute the canonical shape. Little wonder that once the biblical text has been securely anchored in the historical past by “decanonizing” it, the interpreter has difficulty applying it to the modern religious context.¹¹⁾

Thus, Childs proposed to rethink “canon” as “canon” with his central concern of reading the Old and New Testaments¹²⁾ as Christian Scripture using his “canonical approach.”

James A. Sanders, a contemporary of Childs and a scholar fully committed to the historical criticism, also found a decisive limitation to historical criticism, which held the assumption that

10) B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 15.

11) *Ibid.*, 79.

12) In this article we use the traditional term “Old Testament” because it rhymes with the “New Testament.” Recently, it has been called Tanakh, Miqra, the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish Scripture (P. R. Davies, A. C. Sandberg, D. J. Harrington), the First Testament (J. A. Sanders, L. M. McDonald, R. W. Funk), the Elder Testament (C. Seitz) in the scholarly community.

“the earlier the more authentic” and sought to “Go back as far as possible to recover the origins and the authoritative roots.”¹³⁾ He labeled this attitude as “a sort of *primitivism*.”

With all its excitement, biblical criticism has indeed tended to lock the Bible into the past. It has been so keen on recovering original meanings that it has effectively decanonized the Bible or severed it from the ongoing believing communities.¹⁴⁾

As a result, “for some the Bible has become a sort of archaeological tell which only experts can dig.”¹⁵⁾ He cites Gerald Sheppard, “Little wonder that once the biblical text has been securely anchored in the historical past by ‘decanonizing’ it, the interpreter has difficulty applying it to the modern religious context.”¹⁶⁾ Thus, Sanders proposed to rethink “canon” as “canon” with his main methodology of “canonical criticism.”

Bearing in mind the reflections of Childs and Sanders, we come to a full hermeneutic circle with Cheongwon Youshin’s metaphor of “mountain” (canon) and “water” (culture). Walter Brueggemann adds to this circle another illuminating analogy formulated by P. Ricoeur, in terms of three steps or moments:¹⁷⁾ (1) the moment of naïve understanding, (2) the critical moment with hermeneutics of suspicion (“conscious distancing by re-presenting the kerygma in a new situation”), and (3) the

13) James A. Sanders, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 5.

14) Ibid.

15) Ibid.

16) Ibid., 19. G. T. Sheppard, “Canon Criticism: The Proposal of Brevard Childs and an Assessment for Evangelical Hermeneutics,” *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 4 (1974), 3-17. Also cited in Childs, *Introduction*, 79.

17) P. Ricoeur, “Preface to Bultmann,” in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. L. S. Mudge (Fortress, 1980), 58, cited in Dale A. Brueggemann, “Brevard Childs’ Canon Criticism: An Example of Post-critical naïveté,” *JETS* 32 (1989), 312.

post-critical moment (the reader appropriates the meaning of the text by dialectically internalizing the testimony of the text in spite of conscious contradictions in reality). Brueggemann places Childs and Sanders in the third moment.

Now before going into the main discussion, we may ask about the contexts and reasons for the new, stimulating attention towards canon over the past fifty years since Childs and Sanders. We may suggest three reasons and backgrounds with Childs.¹⁸⁾

First, the discoveries and publications of the Qumran manuscripts “demonstrated the enormous diversity, fluidity, and scope of biblical texts,”¹⁹⁾ so that many scholars came to believe that the Old Testament was in a state that was “pluriform and still creatively developing, prior to the period of a single text for each book,”²⁰⁾ for the Tanakh was generally believed to have been stabilized by the council of Jamnia in AD 90.²¹⁾

Second, the discoveries of diverse papyri of the Gnostic Gospels in the Nag Hammadi library and other places widely raised fascination, interest, and a new appreciation of the importance of apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings regarding the debate on the formation of the New Testament canon.

Third, since the pioneering projects of Childs and Sanders, their colleagues and students have intensely debated on canon and canonizations, dividing into two competing camps

18) B. S. Childs, “The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies: Reflections of an Era,” *Pro Ecclesia* 14 (2005), 27-28.

19) Ibid.

20) Eugene Ulrich, “The Notion and Definition of Canon,” in *The Canon Debate*, L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders, eds., (Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 31.

21) Recently, however, there has been a general consensus that the council of Jamnia was not a council *per se* which legislated conciliar decisions related to order, number, scope, list and closure of the Old Testament as sacred books. See J. P. Lewis, “Jamnia Revisited,” in *The Canon Debate*, 146-62. He lists “Frank Cross, Albert Sundberg, Sid Leiman and others” for rejecting the traditional “Jamnia hypothesis.”

emphasizing either the theological model (canon) or the historical model (culture) concerning the diverse dimensions of canon.

With this paper, we hope to add a small but significant East Asian contribution to the biblical canon debate.

2. Polarity of the Idea of Canon

2.1. The Problem of Definition: Canon as a Rule versus a List

Childs once well called to attention that “Much of the present confusion over the problem of canon turns on the failure to reach an agreement regarding the terminology. As a result, the points of both consensus and conflict have been frequently obscured within the debate.”²²⁾ Following Childs, John Barton pointed out sharply, “Our discussion [on canon] may seem by now to have run into the sand,” indicating the sterility of discussion.²³⁾ He continues that “Modern scholars are of course perfectly entitled to use these terms as they wish, but need to recognize the danger of building the conclusions into the premises if they want to use them in discriminating among different historical reconstructions.”²⁴⁾ S. B. Chapman concurs: “Unsurprisingly, contemporary scholars do not agree at all about the proper sense of the term [canon].”²⁵⁾

In the context of contemporary confusions and conflicts in the use of the key term canon, Eugene Ulrich investigated and

22) Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 51. Also quoted in M. J. Kruger, *The Question of Canon* (IVP Academic, 2013), 27.

23) John Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text: the Canon in Early Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 14.

24) *Ibid.*, 15.

25) Stephen B. Chapman, “The Canon Debate: What It Is and Why It Matters,” *JTI* 4 (2010), 277.

analyzed nine major theological dictionaries of the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant faiths and concluded two major meanings of the biblical canon as *terminus technicus* as follows:

1. The canon of scripture, i.e., the canon which scripture constitutes), *the rule of faith* articulated by the scriptures (= *norma normans* [normative rule]), the rule that determines faith, the authoritative principles and guiding spirit which govern belief and practice (emphasis mine).

2. The canon of scripture, i.e., the canon which constitutes scripture, *the list of books* accepted as inspired scripture (= *norma normata* [standardized rule]), *the list* that has been determined, the authoritative list of books that have been accepted as scripture (emphasis mine).²⁶⁾

In short, according to Ulrich's survey, canon can mean both "rule" and "list." This usage of the term fits well with the analysis of G. Sheppard, who crystallized the definition of the term "canon 1" as the "rule" of faith and "canon 2" as the "list" of books:

"Canon 1" can be used to refer to a rule, standard, ideal, norm, or authoritative office or literature, whether oral or written. This dimension emphasizes internal signs of elevated status.

"Canon 2" can be used in the sense of a list, chronology, catalog, fixed collection, and/or standardized text. This puts stress on the precise boundary, limits, or measure of what, from some pre-understood standard, belongs within or falls outside of a specific "canon."²⁷⁾

However, Ulrich proposes to use the term canon in an exclusive sense (Sheppard's canon 1) rather than an inclusive sense (canon 2) to avoid confusion, and he delimits three essential

26) Ulrich, "The Notion and Definition of Canon," 28.

27) Gerald Sheppard, "Canon," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. L. Jones et al. 2nd ed. (Macmillan, 2005), 1407-08.

elements in the concept of canon as follows:

- (1) “*the book, not its textual form*,” that is, canon differs from Scriptural books which were still “pluriform and still creatively developing, prior to the period of a single text for each book.”
- (2) “*Reflective judgment*,” which is “when a group formally decides that it is a constituent requirement that these books which have been exercising authority are henceforth binding is a judgment concerning canon.”
- (3) “*Closed list*.” Canon is judged and determined as “supremely authoritative” books whose lists are closed and differ from other authoritative collections.²⁸⁾

In *The Canon Debate*, Ulrich concurs with the final definition of McDonald: “Canon, in the general sense, that we intend here, denotes a fixed standard or collection of writings that define the faith and identity of a particular religious community.”²⁹⁾ This exclusive definition of canon became the majority view of contemporary scholarship. According to this view, canon as the final shape of authoritative books should be different from various scriptures which were still evolving.³⁰⁾ In other words, there should be a sharp distinction between canon and scripture to avoid confusion.³¹⁾

28) Ulrich, “The Notion and Definition of Canon,” 30-33.

29) Ibid., 34; Lee M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (rev. and enl. ed.; Hendrickson, 1995), 13.

30) See Ulrich’s definition of “a book of scripture” as “a sacred authoritative work believed to have God as its ultimate author, which the community, as a group and individually, recognizes and accepts as determinative for its belief and practice for all time and in all geographical areas.” Yet, “a book of scripture” and “a collection of authoritative scriptures” were in a “pluriform” canonical process before the final canon. Ulrich, “The Notion and Definition of Canon,” 29-30.

31) According to Chapman, a sharp distinction between canon and scripture(s) originated from the work of A. Sundberg and T. Swanson. Chapman, “The

On the surface, this exclusive definition of canon seems neat and clear-cut; however, it tends to be a procrustean bed. Chapman well points out the semantic confusion of this absolute distinction between the two terms: “Scripture is left vague and ill-defined: authoritative but not yet normative, religious but not yet orthodox, inspired but not yet ‘closed’.”³²⁾ In other words, the term “Scripture” became a penultimate authoritative book(s) or collection(s) of books before the final closure of canon. In general usage, Scripture is regarded as a term synonymous with Bible and canon. It would be better to admit a definition inclusive of these two terms, allowing an overlap in usage. Practically, “scripture” denotes the aspect of a particular book, a collection of books, and the finalized book, as we see in the English usage of the singular (“a scripture”), plural (“the scriptures”), or collective (“the Holy Scripture”).³³⁾ Though the term canon underlies the aspect of the final form, it can include literature in the process of evolving. Due to this overlap, Sanders is judicious in proposing a functional understanding of canon: “Canon *as function* antedates canon *as shape*.”³⁴⁾

To create a balance between scripture and canon in their origin, process, and completion, we may also refer to a word of wisdom from the East-Asian perspective of the canon. In his history of Chinese Confucian canonicity Py Suk-suh (皮錫瑞, *Pixirui*) defines canon, scripture, and other related terms as follows:

Canon Debate,” 277. Childs also points out that Sundberg was the first to propose this distinction. Childs, “The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies,” 28. A. C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

32) Chapman, “The Canon Debate,” 280.

33) Ibid.

34) James A. Sanders, “Canon: Hebrew Bible,” in *ABD* 1:843, cited in “The Canon Debate,” 279.

The texts determined by Confucius (*Kongzi*, trad. 551-479 BC), we call canon (經, *jīng*); the texts explained by his disciples, we call scripture (典, *diǎn*) or writings (記, *jì*); and instructions of the disciples, we call doctrine (說, *shuō*). Only *Classic of Odes* (*Shijing*), *Classic of Documents* (*Shujing*), *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing*), *Records of Ritual* (*Lǐ jīng*), *Classics of Music* (*Yuejing*), and *Spring and Autumn* (*Chun-qiu*) were to be called canon. This is because these six classics were determined by the hands of Confucius himself (手定). We can find a similar analogy in calling the words of Buddha as canon (經) in comparison to the rule (律) and doctrine (論) taught by his disciples...³⁵⁾

From the above observations, we can learn several lessons.

First, just like the rich Torah terms, the classical Chinese language contains rich words for the related terms of canonical writings such as 經(書經, 詩經, 聖經, せいきょ), 典(聖典, せいてん), 書(聖書, せいしょ) and particular books such as 書(しょ, 以塞亞書, イザヤ書), 記(き, 士師記), 誌(し, 歷代誌), 語(ご, 論語), 言(げん, 箴言), 錄(ろく, 啓示錄), 傳(ぎょうでん, 使徒行傳), 篇(へん, 詩篇), 歌(か, 雅歌, 哀歌), etc.

Second, the highest authority was given to two key terms, “canon” (經) and “scripture” (典), over other terms, and canon and scripture are nearly synonymous and sometimes used in collocation (經典, “canon scripture”).

Third, there have been long processes of canonization for both canon and scripture. According to tradition, several hundred years had passed before the canonization of the six major canons (六經) by the hand of Confucius. Unfortunately, one of them was lost in later times, resulting in the name, “Pentateuch” (五經).

Fourth, canon and scripture differ according to later interpretations and editions of Confucian scholars.³⁶⁾

35) Py Suk-suh, *Chinese History of Canonics*, trans. Lee Hong-jin (Seoul, 1984), 43. [皮錫瑞『中國經學史』, 이홍진 역 (서울: 동화출판공사, 1984)].

36) Py Suk-suh, *Chinese History of Canonics*, 43. He observes, “Although the Analects (論語) was not the record of the words of Confucius but the record of his disciples,

Finally, although the main contents of Chinese classics are secular in nature, they bear authority due to the fact that they were thought of and taught by Confucius the Saint (聖賢), who knew the heavenly principle. In other words, the primary dimension of canon in the East Asian context lies in its religious significance, rather than its historical and cultural significance.

One major implication of this Confucian perspective is that canon and scripture did not gain authority during their final stages by the later community; instead, they bore authority from the beginning, even though they were still in the process of evolving. We may apply this insight to the Jewish and Christian canons, as C. Seitz maintains that “The word canon can and does have a role to play in evaluating—not just *the final stages* of a collection’s stabilization but also *the early and medial* episodes of canonical shaping” (emphasis mine).³⁷⁾ Of course, we should pay attention to the overall processes, “So [that] attention to the final form is attention to the entirety of a process of development, with an appreciation for how the *totus scriptura* of individual books and larger canonical divisions are themselves commentaries on a rich prehistory of disclosure and rehearsal on the ground of Israel’s lived life with God.”³⁸⁾

we can call it as scripture (典)··· As the *Classics of Music* (Yuejing) was lost during the Han dynasty, the emperor of the late Han dynasty appointed only five doctors for five Classics (五經博士). Afterward, the *Analects* and the *Book of Filial Duty* (孝經) were added. During the Tang dynasty, the canon grew to nine classics, and during the Song dynasty, it grew to thirteen Classics, due to the lack of distinction between canon and later interpretations.”

37) C. Seitz, *The Elder Testament. Canon, Theology, Trinity* (Baylor University Press, 2018), 22.

38) Ibid., 31.

2.2. Two Competing Models of Canon: Extrinsic Model versus Intrinsic Model

Just as with the controversy over the chicken or the egg in the origin of species, scholars ask which is prior between canon and culture in the process of canonization. In other words, did the canon create the community or vice versa? We call the former the “intrinsic model” and the latter the “extrinsic model.” We may begin with the second model since it is the mainstream of contemporary scholarship both in Old and New Testament canonicity.

2.2.1. Extrinsic Model of Canon

According to the extrinsic model, canon was not intended by the biblical writers but was made for the needs of the faith community in their historical contingencies. This view is succinctly summarized by Ulrich: “The books that came to be the Bible did not start off as books of the Bible. In many passages that now constitute those books, the authors did not think that they were writing scripture.”³⁹⁾

J. Barr is one of the most ardent proponents of this extrinsic model. For him, the biblical evidence “available in the text of the Bible as it stands” most clearly shows that “the writers do not reckon with a written ‘scripture’ as a totally dominant, known, and acknowledged factor and force in the life of Israel.”⁴⁰⁾ For example, when the prophets spoke with the formulaic, “Thus says the Lord,” they do not “mention any such scripture;” rather, their speech was “spontaneous.” Thus, in the last centuries before the coming of Christianity, Judaism turned into a scriptural

39) Ulrich, “The Notion and Definition of Canon,” 35.

40) J. Barr, *Holy Scripture, Authority, Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 5.

religion with “a clearly-defined holy written document, the Torah” with the final formation and canonization of the Old Testament as we have today. “It was, in essence, the clear definition of the Torah supreme holy book that created the scriptural character of Judaism.”⁴¹⁾ Because at that time, after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, Judaism had to change her identity from being a temple religion to a scriptural religion.

Barr finds the same process of canonization with the New Testament, as Jesus “never even casually told his disciples to write anything down.” To commit to having a written Gospel “is pure hypothesis, if not pure wishful thinking.”⁴²⁾ L. McDonald concurs with Barr that “The best available information about the earliest followers of Jesus shows that they did not have such canons as the church presently possess today, nor did they indicate that their successors should draw them up.”⁴³⁾ For example, the apostle Paul did not expect his advice to become inspired Scripture while writing so many letters. We may quote a classic argument for this position from Powell: “The authors of our New Testament books did not know that they were writing scripture,”⁴⁴⁾ as well as from Schneemelcher: “The Gospels were not written as ‘canonical’ books, which were intended to be a norm as a ‘new scripture’ or to claim authority.”⁴⁵⁾

In short, according to the extrinsic model, the Jewish and Christian Scriptures were not written or intended to be canon. Rather, they *became* canon. Kruger evaluates this position that “the idea of canon was something that was retroactively imposed

41) Ibid., 10.

42) Ibid., 12.

43) L. M. McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Hendrickson, 2007), 426, cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 18.

44) M. A. Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 2009), 50, cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 120.

45) W. Schneemelcher, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McLachlan Wilson (Westminster John Knox, 1991), 1:17, cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 120.

upon those books at a later time.”⁴⁶⁾ Childs succinctly summarizes this position: “It is assumed by many that the formation of a canon is a late, ecclesiastical activity, *external* to the biblical literature itself, which was subsequently *imposed* on the writings.”⁴⁷⁾ For Childs, this position is a “modern consensus” that leads to “the almost universal rejection of a traditionally earlier dating for the first stage of the New Testament’s canonization during the first half of the second century.”⁴⁸⁾

In sum, the extrinsic model regards canon as the production of a later community of faith, out of ever-changing situations to determine their “identity” (W. C. Smith),⁴⁹⁾ their “self-descriptions” (Kelsey),⁵⁰⁾ or even “just a political construct, an ideological instrument, created to wield power and control” (Kruger’s evaluation).⁵¹⁾ Taking the book of Isaiah as a test case for this model, Blenkinsopp finds “the record of different voices enunciating different and often conflicting points of view” in the narrative insertions and evaluates the canon “as the resolution of ideological conflicts, the imposition of a particular dominant ideology or orthodoxy by *force majeure* or as a compromise between different ideologies.”⁵²⁾ As observed by P. R. Davies, “canon formation is a cultural phenomenon and a natural process in any literate society,”⁵³⁾ and “Jewish and

46) Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 17.

47) B. S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM, 1984), 21. Cf. Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 18f.

48) Childs, *The New Testament as Canon*, 21.

49) W. C. Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (London: SCM, 1993), cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 38, fn. 50.

50) D. H. Kelsey, *The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Fortress, 1975), 106, cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 39, fn. 51.

51) Kruger lists A. K. Bowman and G. Wolf (1994), G. Aichele (2001), J. E. Brenneman (1997) et al. for this position. *Ibid.*, fn. 52.

52) J. Blenkinsopp, “The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: Isaiah as a Test Case,” in *The Canon Debate*, 62.

Christian canons need to be seen in this cultural perspective.”⁵⁴⁾

2.2.2. Intrinsic Model of Canon

In contrast to the extrinsic model, the intrinsic model suggests that the idea of canon was developed “more organically” within the faith community in her interaction with given revelation, teaching, and traditions, instead of being imposed by later communities with their cultural absorption of the given religious traditions. Thus, the process of canon formation was the result of natural development from the “internal dynamics” of the faith community.⁵⁵⁾ Childs takes a cue from the idea of “canonical consciousness,” which “arose at the inception of the Christian church and lies deep within the New Testament literature itself.”⁵⁶⁾ Based on his observation on this canonical consciousness Childs is able to argue that “there is an organic continuity in the historical process of the development of an established canon of sacred writings from the earliest stages of the New Testament to the final canonical stabilization of its scope.”⁵⁷⁾

In Old Testament studies, scholars rarely pick up the term canon(ical) consciousness, though it is presupposed by the religious community as asserted by Samuel Sandmel, who used to say that “Judaism is Torah, and Torah is Judaism; and until one understands that, one can never understand Judaism.”⁵⁸⁾

53) P. R. Davies, *Whose Bible Is It Anyway?* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 17-27, cited in Childs, “The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies: Reflections of an Era,” 31.

54) P. R. Davies, “The Jewish Scriptural Canon in Cultural Perspective,” in *The Canon Debate*, 36.

55) E. Ferguson, “Factors Leading to the Selection and Closure of the New Testament Canon,” in *The Canon Debate*, 295. Cf. Kruger, p. 21.

56) Childs, *New Testament as Canon*, 21.

57) Ibid.

58) James A. Sanders, “The Issue of Closure in the Canonical Process,” *Canon Debate*,

However, Gerald T. Sheppard discovered “canon conscious redactions” within the Hebrew Bible itself as he examined the canonical understanding of “wisdom” and “wisdom books” in pre-rabbinic Judaism.⁵⁹⁾ He further detected the evidence of canon conscious redactions in the whole Tanakh and the New Testament, “whereby assumptions about the normativeness [his canon 1] of the traditions and of their being read together in a specific collection [his canon 2] coincide.”⁶⁰⁾ Quite recently, C. Seitz argued for canon consciousness, based on his idea of “core canon” by observing an interesting phenomenon in the Tanakh as follows:

The Ketuvim serve the purpose of establishing the centrality of the core canon of the Law and the Prophets. They introduce a rich miscellany of writings whose sense-making is enhanced and enriched by association with works outside, and at times inside, the sequence that it presents. It further gives evidence of a canon-consciousness not within a book of Law-prophets, but from outside. In so doing, it also is capable of finding a settled and ordered existence alongside and closing off this canonical presentation by means of its own unique character and shape.

We may take a note from Gadamer’s philosophical term *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* (“historically effected consciousness”) to understand canonical consciousness, which implies that “the interpreter’s consciousness has in some measure been brought into being by the text; it is itself in some degree a product of the text; it is a consciousness of the text to be

260. Sanders says, “By Torah, of course, he meant not only the Pentateuch but all tradition that has derived from it.”

59) Gerald Sheppard, “Canon,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. L. Jones et al. 2nd ed. (Macmillan, 2005), 1411.

60) Ibid., 1410.

interpreted.”⁶¹⁾

Of course, the terms canon and canonical consciousness are often found in the writings of the scholars in the camp of the extrinsic model of canon, but in a quite different way. For example, McDonald and Sanders believe that the canon consciousness of the New Testament emerged in the church of the fourth century AD.⁶²⁾ The late dating of canon consciousness on their part was caused by their definition of the term canon as “a closed body of Christian scriptures.” This means that canon consciousness was not inherent in the scriptures but incidental due to external factors in the history of the church. In a similar vein, Gamble argues that the second century AD was a decisive period in the history of the New Testament canon with “the primary stimuli in the heterodox movements of that time” by Marcion: “beyond Marcion, the church’s conflict with Gnosticism is often likewise seen as a crucial factor in heightening the *church’s canon-consciousness*...to determine more clearly which books conveyed true and authentic teaching.”⁶³⁾

However, we may note with Meade that “there is not only a ‘history of the canon,’ where the inclusion or exclusion of certain books are decided, but there is also a ‘canonical process’ or growing ‘canon consciousness’ where traditions and their literary expressions gain authoritative status in the communities they sustain. Before the history of the NT canon began, the canonical process was well developed, and it is this factor more than any other that explains the presence of canonical pseudepigrapha.”⁶⁴⁾ Kruger, a major proponent of the intrinsic

61) J. Dunn, “Has the Canon a Continuing Function?”, in *The Canon Debate*, 574.

H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), particularly 300-307.

62) McDonald and Sanders, “Introduction,” in *The Canon Debate*, 13.

63) H. Y. Gamble, “The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis,” in *The Canon Debate*, 291.

model, argues that the canonical books as “a collection of books that are given by God to his corporate church” are “what they are by virtue of the divine purpose, and not by virtue of their use or acceptance by the community of faith, then, in principle, they can exist as such apart from that community...and [are] therefore still authoritative—prior to anyone using them or recognizing them.”⁶⁵⁾ So, the intrinsic model of canon infers canon consciousness from the ontological understanding of canon as the Word of God. However, the intrinsic model does not deny the idea of a long process to the final canonization on the part of the faith community. Rather, this model underlines the organic developments of canon from its inception to the completion with a seed and tree analogy. They assume a natural and organic process from the primitive stage to the final stage, instead of a radical discontinuity in the historical developments of canonical scriptures. In connection with this, Meade poses a relevant question while providing an interesting model of “push and pull” to integrate the two competing models:

Is the formation of the New Testament “pushed” from elements inherent within itself or its Jewish origins or is it “pulled” into being by forces of the church and society largely external to the texts themselves?⁶⁶⁾

64) D. G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Eerdmans, 1986), 206, cited in Clark, *Canon Debate*, 467. Cf. Kruger, 21. Meade also considers 1 Timothy 5:18 to be evidence of an early canon consciousness of early Christians. Meade, “Ancient Near Eastern Apocalypticism,” 318, cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 202.

65) Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 39.

66) D. G. Meade, “Ancient Near Eastern Apocalypticism and the Origins of the New Testament Canon of Scripture,” in *The Bible as a Human Witness: Hearing the Word of God through Historically Dissimilar Traditions*, eds. R. Heskett & B. Irwin (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), 302-21, see p. 304, cited in Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 22.

Of course, for Meade, the biblical canon is shaped by both pushes and pulls. However, the intrinsic model argues for the priority of the “push” from the internal dimension of canon over the “pull” of the succeeding community. It seems an overstatement to say that the New Testament writers did not recognize their divine authority in their messages and writings. They believed that they were transmitting the authentic apostolic traditions (παράδοσις, 2 Thes 2:15). Barton points out well that “It scarcely seems to matter very much whether or not we say that they were ‘Scripture’: their status as the most important books in the world was assured. If they were not *graphē*, then *graphē* had been surpassed by them; phenomenologically, they were Scripture, having the kind of authority and standing for Christians that holy books do have.”⁶⁷⁾ He goes on to say that these New Testament books did not “gradually increase in stature until they could be seen as equal with the Old Testament; rather, the evidence of their circulation and use shows that for the first few generations the contents of these books had a status greater than that of the Old Testament...once they did come to be cited as *graphē* in exactly the same sense as the Old Testament a Rubicon had been crossed.”⁶⁸⁾

We may add a Korean perspective on this matter. In Korean, the word for “word” is unique in comparison to its English (word), German (*wort*), French (*le mot, le parole*), Hebrew (*dabar*), Greek (*logos*), Chinese (言), and Japanese (ご, ことば) counterparts. In Korean, the general expression for the “word” is *mal* (말), but *malsm* (말씀) is honorific. Korean grammarians argue that the suffix *-sm* in *malsm* comes from the word for “god” (*shin*, 신, 神). In general, Korean verbs add an “s” to the root when expressing honor.⁶⁹⁾ Thus, the inherent authority

67) John Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon* (SPCK, 1997), 25. Also cited in Kruger, *Question of Canon*, 122.

68) Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter*, 68.

of the “word” of God and his messengers is presupposed and accepted in the Korean mentality. Ironically, though Barr is allergic to the term canon, he admits the authority of scripture in the utterances of Jesus, Paul, and others: “*of course* the Old Testament was the Word of God, *of course* it had authority, *of course* it was true that its words would not pass away...”

This is in line with the understanding of P. Ackroyd’s famous formulation: “[Canon] begins imperceptibly in the recognition of certain *utterances*...as representing, in reality, the word of God, and in the acceptance as binding of such *single utterances* or *groups of utterances*... It is recognized that the requirements of God may be made precise in a particular form which continues to standardize the understanding and presentation of subsequent developments of belief” (emphasis mine).⁷⁰ We may add one more confirmation of the canonical consciousness inherent in the inspired word of the religious authorities in Sanskrit. For example, “In the Vedic hymns, the neuter noun *brahman* denotes the cosmic principle or power contained in the priestly or inspired utterance. As such, it came to be viewed as embodied in the Veda when the latter was fixed in a body of texts.”⁷¹ In Confucianism, canons are generally regarded as the embodiment of the words of holy saints. In Daoism, *Dao* (道) is regarded as both “transcendent as the supreme wellspring of creativity for heaven, earth, and humanity (天地人)” and “immanent within

69) This information was given to me by Prof. Young-jin Min. *The Naver Korean Dictionary* describes that the honorific form of malsm (“word”) originated from the root for “shamanistic god” as such: mal (말;言; “word”) + sm (승;神; “god”). <https://ko.dict.naver.com/#/userEntry/koko/f937be78dd07c9082118443e9cd75d90>.

70) Peter R. Ackroyd, *Continuity: A Contribution to the Study of the Old Testament Religious Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 13-14, cited in Chapman, “The Canon Debate,” 279.

71) J. C. Heesterman, “Brahman,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion* 2nd ed. (Thomson Gale, 2005), 1024-26.

all life as the vital power (*de*) that informs the nature (*xing*) of each of the myriad beings (*wanwu*).⁷²⁾ *Dao* is realized by the saints and embodied by their disciples and community.

In sum, we may conclude that there exists a dynamic relationship between canon and community in the formation and preservation of authoritative writings. As F. Norris writes:

Church and scripture do not represent the two parts of a chicken-egg argument. We need not establish which is first nor live in agony because we cannot find the answer. They have existed in close intertwining with each other. Giving proper attention to either church or New Testament (!) means that both must be taken seriously in conjunction with each other.⁷³⁾

3. Canonical Hermeneutics Debates between Sanders and Childs and Later Developments

In the heyday of historical criticism in the 1970s, two eminent, American Old Testament scholars felt a deep chasm between the atomistic, scientific, and objective research of academia and the synthetic, religious-theological, and subjective preaching in the pulpit. So, they proposed a new sense of canon in biblical interpretation to build a bridge between academia and church. They were Sanders and Childs. They proposed canonical interpretation in order to overcome the sterility and limitation of historical criticism with a revival of canon consciousness in interpretation. They became the main sources

72) J. Miller, "Ecology and Religion: Ecology and Daoism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion* 2nd ed., (Thomson Gale, 2005), 2635-38.

73) Frederick W. Norris, "The Canon of Scripture in the Church," in *The Free Church and the Early Church*, ed. D. H. Williams, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 23, cited in Chapman, "The Canon Debate," 287.

of the two streams of canonical interpretation that were later bifurcated by their colleagues and students, subsequently stimulating a new dimension of canon debates on diverse areas such as the definition and nature of canon, canonical process and final form, the date of canonization, the limitation of historical criticism, and the relation between canon and faith community. We set out with three major differences of perspectives in canonical interpretation between Sanders and Childs, followed by developments by their successors.

3.1. Canonical Criticism versus Canonical Approach

As we note the date of the publications on canonical interpretation, Sanders was the first scholar who proposed canonical criticism in his book, *Torah and Canon* (1972). He was highly esteemed by Childs as one who “proposed the most original attempt at providing a fresh theological interpretation of the role of canon for the English-speaking academy.”⁷⁴⁾ However, Sanders and Childs differ sharply in their evaluation on the role of historical criticism in their canonical interpretations. Sanders firmly insists his methodology as “canonical criticism,” because he wants his interpretation to be seen as “a logical step in the development of biblical literary and historical criticism beyond form and redaction criticism.”⁷⁵⁾ In this respect, he differs from Childs “who resists thinking of his own work on canon as a part of biblical criticism.”⁷⁶⁾ Sanders discovers “a kind of logic of evolution at work in the history of biblical criticism since its inception” through source criticism, form criticism, and tradition criticism, which try to

74) Childs, “The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies,” 33.

75) Sanders, *Canon and Community*, xvi.

76) Sanders, *Canon and Community*, 2.

find smaller literary units, and eventually through rhetorical criticism and redaction criticism, which focus more on larger literary units in their final stages of composition.⁷⁷⁾ Among these diverse biblical criticisms, Sanders is fully committed to tradition criticism by which he figures out the reinterpretations of ancient traditions in later canonical texts, based on the function and authority of traditions. In other words, Sanders' canonical criticism is to delve into the hermeneutical axioms and rules of later canonical writers and interpreters. Therefore, he is fully committed to the legacy of the Enlightenment and insists on calling his methodology "canonical criticism."

As mentioned earlier, Childs rejects labeling his method as a criticism: "The approach which I am advocating has been described by others as 'canonical criticism.' I am not happy with this term because it implies that the concern with canon is viewed as another historical-critical *technique* which can take its place alongside source criticism, form criticism, rhetorical criticism, and the like."⁷⁸⁾ He goes on to say, "I do not envision the approach to canon in this light. Rather, the issue at stake turns on establishing a *stance* from which the Bible is to be read as Sacred Scripture" (emphasis mine).⁷⁹⁾ Thus, Childs coins his method the "canonical approach." This is because his interpretation is not to be regarded as a technique or methodology but as a stance and perspective to Scripture as canon. The major concern for Childs was theological, in contrast to Sanders' historical emphasis. This divergence in their starting points led to differences in their final destinations in canonical interpretations.

77) Ibid., 8.

78) Brevard Childs, "The Canonical Shape of Prophetic Literature," *Interpretation* 32 (1978), 54. Also found in Sanders, *Canon and Community*, 18.

79) Ibid.

3.2. Canonical Process versus Final Form

For Sanders, the canonical process is far more important than the final shape of the canon. His canonical criticism is an endeavor to dig out the process of evolution from the earlier traditions in the form of smaller units to the final stage “in a literary critical history of the Bible’s formation.”⁸⁰⁾ In other words, there have been long and complex canonical processes behind the final shape of the canon. Therefore, his “canonical criticism is much more than observations about the final shaping of the Bible” in contrast to Childs’ approach.⁸¹⁾

We may ask why Sanders is so preoccupied with the canonical process than with the final form. First of all, we have inherited only a limited scope of ancient Israel’s important sacral literature, so we may ask why some are missing and some were chosen for the final shape of the canon. However, this is not the actual starting point for the canonical process. Rather, the decisive moment in the canonical process of the Old Testament was the destruction of the nation of Judah by the Babylonians. At that historic moment, the ancient Jewish traditions “were viable in the crucifixion-resurrection experience...and provided the vehicle for Judaism’s birth out of the ashes of what had been.”⁸²⁾ This moment was the very starting point for Sander’s canonical criticism with his existential and essential observations with the question of “how and why the Law and the Prophets, which for the most part are made up of pre-exilic...received the shape or form or gestalt in which we inherit them.”⁸³⁾ His canonical interpretation takes a substantial starting point by raising a question about the role and function of ancient sacral traditions

80) Sanders, *Torah and Canon*, 9.

81) Ibid.

82) Ibid., xix.

83) Ibid.

in the death and resurrection experience of the believing community.

One more main reason for Sanders' concern for the canonical process is based on his conviction on the fluidity of canon in the pre-AD 70 periods. The decisive contribution to this idea came from the discovery of Qumran manuscripts, which gave him "a vantage point...on the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible."⁸⁴) He advocates the "pluralism" of the Old Testament, especially based on his assessment of the Psalm Scroll from Cave 11.⁸⁵) Brueggemann sums up the position of Sanders: "Pluralism may extend even to the meaning of the canonical text(s). In fact, says Sanders, that very plurality, which manifests itself in paradox, is a hallmark of canonicity."⁸⁶)

Childs agrees with Sanders that there has been a long and complex process of tradition history behind the final shape of the canon; however, Childs tends to downplay the process of the hypothetical evolution of the text. He evaluates Sanders' attempt to reconstruct the hermeneutic process within ancient Israel as "a highly speculative enterprise, especially in the light of the almost total lack of information regarding the history of canonization" in the Scripture itself.⁸⁷) So the main concern for Childs is to understand the final shape of the canonical text over tradition history in which the original social and historical backgrounds have disappeared backwards. For him, only the final text became a witness to the full history of

84) Ibid., 12.

85) See J. A. Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls* (New York: Cornell Uni. Press, 1967). See also G. H. Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Scroll Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate," *CBQ* 47 (1985), 624-42. See also my assessment on 11QPs^a in its liturgical character. Jungwoo Kim, "The Arrangement of Biblical Psalms and 11QPs^a and Its Canonical Implication," *Canon&Culture* 2:1 (2008), 89-120 (Korean).

86) Brueggemann, "Brevard Childs' Canon Criticism," 320.

87) Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 57.

revelation. Therefore, the final shape of the canon is authoritative in finding out the meaning of the biblical text.

The polarity between the canonical process of Sanders and the final shape of Childs is also caused by their different views on the role of community in the formation of canon. Sanders argues for the primary role of community in the formation of canon, while Childs argues for the primacy of God as the ultimate author of the Bible over the community. Thus, we may conclude that Sanders' canonical criticism is more oriented towards history, in contrast to the theological orientation of Childs' canonical approach.

3.3. Nature of Canon: Adaptability and Stability versus Vehicle of God's Revelation

J. N. Oswalt succinctly points out the ideological differences on canon between Sanders and Childs as follows: "Childs seems to want to talk about revealed truths, whereas Sanders seems to want to talk about theological trajectories. For Childs the content is normative; but for Sanders, the stages and direction of the process guide us in our theologizing."⁸⁸⁾

Sanders finds his main concern for the developments of theological trajectories in the primary character of canon in terms of adaptability and stability: "These two qualities must be seen together and in the same light."⁸⁹⁾ First, canon is adaptable to any situation, because it repeats "the community value in a context other than that of its 'original' provenance." The adaptability of canon resignifies the original meaning to some

88) J. N. Oswalt, "Canonical Criticism: A Review from a Conservative Viewpoint," *JETS* 30 (1987), 319.

89) *Ibid.*, 22.

extent in different contexts with its theological stability. Sanders sees the multivalence of biblical stories in the traditions and formations of the Bible with their adaptability.⁹⁰⁾ All of these stories have been adaptable to different cultures and contexts until now. He sums up the primary character of the Bible as follows:

All this matter of *stability-adaptability*, *pluralism*, *multivalency*, *repetition-recitation*, and *resignification* are proper focuses of study for canonical criticism. Very important also is regard for the inherent *constraints* within a text.⁹¹⁾

In this respect, “the Bible is a paradigm; it conjugates the nouns and verbs of the divine integrity in a plethora of different kinds of situations and conditions. To monotheize, in this sense, is not to progress or evolve toward monotheism, but rather to struggle within and against polytheistic contexts to affirm God’s oneness, both in antiquity and today.”⁹²⁾ For Sanders, this is “the true shape of the Bible as canon, which consists of its unrecorded hermeneutics which lie between the lines of most of its literature.”⁹³⁾

However, Childs is critical of Sanders’ understanding on

90) E.g., the traditions of the patriarchs, the parallel stories in the book of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, Hezekiah’s struggle with Sennacherib in Isaiah 36-39, and even the four Gospels of Jesus Christ. Sanders, *Canon and Community*, 22-23.

91) Ibid., 24. He further argues, “The essential character of the canon in terms of “*stability-adaptability*, *pluralism*, *multivalency*, *repetition-recitation*, and *resignification*” is witnessed in the borrowing, learning, and absorbing throughout five epochs—the Bronze and Iron Ages and the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman eras—spanning about 1,500 or 1,800 years, struggling against all forms of polytheism to preserve monotheism.”

92) Ibid., 52. See also Sanders, “Canonical Context and Canonical Criticism,” 193. “It provides a paradigm for how to learn from the communities/traditions and for *how* to learn from the rest of the world as well.”

93) Ibid., 46.

the adaptability and stability of the nature of canon. For Childs, the term stability signifies the “established structure and contents,” while adaptability implies that it addresses the community of each succeeding generation. More importantly, these two categories are essentially existential and “understand the growth of canon as a search for identity in times of crisis, oscillating between the two poles of stability and adaptability.”⁹⁴⁾ In Childs’ opinion, “the historical and theological forces which evoked the formation of the canon were of a very different order from an identity crisis.”⁹⁵⁾ Therefore, Sanders’ hermeneutics “replaces a theocentric understanding of divine revelation with an existential history.”⁹⁶⁾

In this sense, Childs is far more sensitive to the theological nature of the Bible. Chapman rightly says, “At the root of the matter for Childs was the genre question: what exactly are we reading? His categories of scripture and canon represented an effort to construe the nature of the biblical literature and its historical development more accurately.”⁹⁷⁾ Childs also seems to be moreover committed to the theological nature of the Scripture. For him, it is “the vehicle to encounter God.”⁹⁸⁾ His insistence on the final form of Scripture is based on his observation of the “constitutive of the canon” shaped by the “peculiar relation between the text and people of God.”⁹⁹⁾ The Old Testament canon has been shaped by this history of encounter between God and his people Israel, and this unique

94) Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 57.

95) *Ibid.*

96) *Ibid.*, 59.

97) Stephen B. Chapman, “Brevard Childs as a Historical Critic: Divine Concession and the Unity of the Canon,” in *The Bible as Christian Scripture. The Work of Brevard Childs*, ed. by C. R. Seitz & K. H. Richards (Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 65.

98) Harrisville & Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture*, 320-21.

99) Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 75.

history became normative for all successive generations of this community of faith. “By shaping Israel’s traditions into the form of normative scripture the biblical idiom no longer functions for the community of faith as free-floating metaphor, but as the divine imperative and promise to a historically conditioned people of God whose legacy the Christian church confess to share.”¹⁰⁰⁾ For Childs, the Bible points to the divine reality; the final objective of biblical interpretation is “to hear the word of God.”

In sum, Sanders’ commitment to his methodology as canonical criticism, his primary concern to the canonical process, and his understanding on the nature of canon in terms of adaptability and stability all point to the direction of his canonical hermeneutic “to see canon as culture” (見經祇是文). In contrast, Childs’ insistence to retain his approach as a stance and paradigm, with his emphasis on the final shape, and his understanding on the nature of canon as the vehicle of God’s revelation point to his assessment of “to see canon as canon” (見經祇是經) in the final analysis.

4. Later Developments of Canon Debates

After the foundational works of Sanders and Childs on canon, a comprehensive monograph on biblical canonicity and canonical interpretations was published in 2002 with the initiative of L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders as the main editors. About thirty-two of the “most significant scholars on canon research” contributed diverse issues at stake, such as canon’s definition, criteria, process, scope, and structure, historical literary evidence, textual criticism, pseudepigrapha and apocrypha, and the closure

100) Ibid., 77.

and openness of the Old and New Testaments. Most of the writers are in line with the position of Sanders.¹⁰¹⁾

In 2005, Childs drew up an illuminating landscape on the historical canon debates before and after Sanders and himself in both the English-speaking world and Europe. He begins with the nineteenth-century scholarly debate between Zahn and Harnack and evaluates A. C. Sundberg's 1957 dissertation as a highly significant contribution to the canon debate for his sharp distinction between scripture and canon.¹⁰²⁾ Sundberg's terminological distinction became widely accepted by later scholars in line with Sanders and "shifted the discussion primarily to the historical problems related to the process that ended in the canonization of the Jewish and Christian Bibles."¹⁰³⁾ Childs lists Ulrich, McDonald, H. Y. Gamble, P. Davies, J. Blenkinsopp, J. A. Sanders, and D. M. Carr as belonging to the group "whose major emphasis shifted to historical reconstructions of extrinsic forces as decisive."¹⁰⁴⁾ In contrast, Childs regards W. Wall and E. Bovon, in their essay in *The Canon Debate*, as stressing "the enduring theological interest in the final literary product of the canonical process, and that the role of the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ" in the New Testament canon process.¹⁰⁵⁾

As for the debate over canon in Germany, Childs introduces Kaesemann (the 1950s), R. Rentorff (1993), C. Dohmen (1992),

101) L. McDonald and J. A. Sanders felt something was missing in their venture, for notable scholars such as "Bruce Metzger, Roger Beckwith, Earle Ellis, Brevard Childs, and Gerald Sheppard" were invited to participate but unable to join.

L. M. McDonald, J. A. Sanders, "Introduction," in *The Canon Debate*, 17.

102) Childs, "The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies: Reflections of an Era," 24-5. A. C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Harvard Uni. Press, 1964).

103) Ibid., 29.

104) Ibid., 30. We may add R. Funk, "The Once and Future New Testament," in *The Canon Debate*, 541.

105) Ibid., 35.

R. Albertz (1995),¹⁰⁶⁾ and N. Lohfink (1992) and lists “B. Janowski, R. Rendtorff, and M. Oeming” from the Protestant side and “N. Lohfink, C Dohmen, E. Zenger, T. Söding, H. Frankemölle, W. Gross, among many others” from the Catholic side.¹⁰⁷⁾ He expands his horizon in dealing with the Jewish-Christian dialogue initiated by R. Rendtorff (1993), K. Koch (1991), E. Zenger (1991, 1998), and C. Dohmen (1995) et al.¹⁰⁸⁾ Childs evaluates the debate on the role of canon within the German-speaking scholarship as having a very different focus from that of the English-speaking world: “By remaining primarily church-oriented, it was able to wrestle with the modern task of biblical interpretation from a canonical perspective in a far more profound theological manner and to break open many new intellectual frontiers.” Childs embraces several features of the German debate, in (1) dealing with theological issues lying behind the heart of canon debate; (2) focusing on the nature of the process and the nature of the final form over a debate between canonical process and final form; and (3) understanding “the critical centrality of the theological relationship between the two Testaments and rightly focused on the Jewish-Christian dialogue.”¹⁰⁹⁾ In conclusion, Childs affirms his ontological view of the Bible in the inseparable unity of the divine and human dimensions, which “finds its closest analogy in the *incarnation* of Jesus Christ, truly man and truly God” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁰⁾

106) He was supported by the Copenhagen school and H. Räisänen, which betrayed a “radically secular position” that had little support from other scholars. Ibid., 38.

107) Ibid., 39.

108) Ibid., 41-44.

109) Ibid., 44.

110) Ibid., 45. Childs thinks that Christological readings of the Old Testament have been inadequately dealt with by modern biblical scholarship due to their limitation of the proper understanding of the relation between the Old and New Testaments. “The church has always confessed that the Old Testament is an integral part of the Christian Bible because of its witness to Jesus Christ.”

This ontological understanding of the canon in the analogy of incarnation on Childs' part is succeeded and enhanced by C. Seitz, in his reflection on "the character of the sacred writings as disclosing an *ontological truth* about God through the economies of his life with Israel" as asserted by Irenaeus (emphasis mine).¹¹¹) For Seitz, canonical interpretation is much more than "a kind of synchronic, final form reading," thus going beyond the legacy of Childs, who also opened the door of the theological subject matter of the canon.¹¹²) Rather, it is a search for the "character of the text," endeavoring to point to "theological hermeneutics that allow the proper subject matter of scripture to be disclosed."¹¹³) For him, this "proper subject matter" of the Old Testament is, in other words, "its unique presentation of monotheism."¹¹⁴) The monotheism is witnessed in the historical voice of the Old Testament, which *prospectively* points to the reality of One God. In this way, he is able to argue that "it is the literal sense of the Old Testament that is generating, within its own grammar and syntax, the theological design of ontology."¹¹⁵) He calls this phenomenon a "morphological fit"

111) Seitz, *The Elder Testament. Canon, Theology, Trinity*, 28. See also C. Seitz, *The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible* (Baker Academic, 2011), 27-91.

112) *Ibid.*, 30.

113) *Ibid.*, 33. In this regard, he quotes John Behr: "The canon of truth, then, is not so much a list of obligatory beliefs, but a hypothesis or presupposition for reading Scripture as Scripture—to see in it the image of the King." John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea. Vol. 1 in The Formation of Christian Theology* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).

114) *Ibid.*, 4.

115) *Ibid.*, 45. The hermeneutical movement from the text and reality (res, subject matter) was already pointed out by Childs: "Rather, it is constitutive of true interpretation to move within a circle which encompasses both the movement from text to reality as well as from reality to text. That subtlety is required is obvious. The movement from res to witness dare not destroy the historical voice of the text." B. S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*:

that is “not just at the level of economic figural intention but belongs to the ontology of One God who is ‘incarnate’ by means of his Word to and with Israel.”¹¹⁶⁾ In other words, “Here is the conjunction of theological and literary and historical extravagance, all daring to claim to speak of God and to be God’s speech and *to incarnate God’s self and presence*” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁷⁾

Seitz emphasizes the “distinctive kind of incarnation” of the One God in the Old Testament in his “shekinah, word, Torah, wisdom that was truly himself but that also pointed to an ontology before time.”¹¹⁸⁾ In other words, “the logos of God is the active means by which God makes himself known within Israel, given the non-polytheistic portrayal that lies at the heart of the Old Testament’s theological significance.”¹¹⁹⁾ After reflecting on the ontology of the biblical canon as the incarnation of God in his word, Seitz concludes with hope for Christian interpretation in which “the conceptual lens on the Elder Scripture has been widened so that as canon it may properly speak of One God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”¹²⁰⁾

Last but not least, we may ponder about the ontological nature of Scripture with the enlightenment story of Yak-yong Jeong (茶山 丁若鏞, 1762-1836), an eminent Confucian scholar in the Joseon dynasty, as he shared his change in worldview through his encounter with the Christian Scriptures:

Under the full moon of April in 1784, my brothers and I went down to Seoul through the waters of the Han River with Yi Beyok (李檠) in the same boat. In the boat, as I heard about the origin

Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible (Fortress, 1993), 381.

116) Seitz, *The Elder Testament*, 45.

117) *Ibid.*, 277.

118) *Ibid.*, 108.

119) *Ibid.*, 45.

120) *Ibid.*, 279.

of the creation of heaven and earth and the principle of body and spirit, life and death, everything was wonderful and mysterious, like the endlessness of the galaxies. After returning from Seoul, I was privileged to read *De Deo Verax Disputatio* and several other books together with Beyok Yi, and I was deeply pleased and inclined to them.¹²¹⁾

With the spiritual baptism of the Christian theistic worldview, Yak-yong Jeong dedicated himself to breaking down the contemporary, neo-Confucian, ideological paradigm of canonical studies, which had replaced the concept of “theistic heaven” (天) with “epistemological reason” (理) in Confucian canonical interpretations, and shaping up instead a new, theistic paradigm featuring the centrality of canon in interpretation and focusing on the living and emotional encounter of God for faith and praxis (實學).

<주요어>

정경, 성경, 믿음의 규칙, 공동체, 정경 의식, 정경적 과정, 정경적 형태, 경학, 동아시아 경전학

<Keywords>

canon, Scripture, rule of faith, community, canon consciousness, canonical process, canonical shape, canonics, the East-Asian Canonics

* Received February 15, 2022, Revised March 30, 2022, Accepted April 4, 2022

121) 丁若鏞, 『與全』vol 1: 15, 42 ‘先仲氏墓誌銘.’

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter R., *Continuity: A Contribution to the Study of the Old Testament Religious Tradition*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.
- Barr, J., *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, Westminster, 1983.
- Brueggemann, D. A., "Brevard Childs' Canon Criticism: An Example of Post-critical naïveté," *JETS* 32 (1989), 311-26.
- Barton, J., *The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon*, SPCK, 1997.
- Behr, J., The Way to Nicaea. Vol. 1 in *The Formation of Christian Theology*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.
- Blenkinsopp, J., "The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: Isaiah as a Test Case," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson Publishers, 2002, 53-67.
- Chapman, S. B., "The Canon Debate: What It Is and Why It Matters," *JTI* 4 (2010), 273-94.
- _____, "Brevard Childs as a Historical Critic: Divine Concession and the Unity of the Canon," in *The Bible as Christian Scripture. The Work of Brevard Childs*, ed. C. R. Seitz and K. H. Richards; Society of Biblical Literature, 2013, 63-83.
- Childs, B. S., *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Fortress, 1979.
- _____, "The Canonical Shape of Prophetic Literature," *Interpretation* 32 (1978), 46-55.
- _____, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*, Fortress, 1985.
- _____, "The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies: Reflections of an Era", *Pro Ecclesia* 14 (2005), 26-45.
- _____, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*, Fortress, 1993
- Davis, P. R., "The Jewish Scriptural Canon in Cultural Perspective", in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson

- Publishers, 2002, 36-52.
- Dunn, J., "Has the Canon a Continuing Function?", in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson Publishers, 2002, 558-79.
- Ferguson, E., "Factors Leading to the Selection and Closure of the New Testament Canon," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson Publishers, 2002, 295-320.
- Gamble, H. Y., "The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson Publishers, 2002, 267-94.
- Graham, W. A., *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*, Cambridge Uni. Press, 1987.
- Kelsey, D. H., *The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology*, Fortress, 1975.
- Kim, J. W., "A Comparative Approach to the Theistic Canonical Interpretation of Dasan Yak-yong Cheong and Brevard S. Childs," *Journal of Religion* 38 (2005), 61-92 (Korean).
- _____, "The Arrangement of biblical Psalms and 11Qpsa and Its Canonical Implication," *Canon & Culture* 2:1 (2008), 89-120 (Korean).
- Kraft, R. A., "The Codex and Canon Consciousness", in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson Publishers, 2002, 229-233.
- Kruger, M. J., *The Question of Canon*, IVP Academic, 2013.
- Lewis, J. P., "Jamnia Revisited," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Hendrickson Publishers, 146-62.
- McDonald, L. M., *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*, Hendrickson, 2007.
- Meade, D. G., "Ancient Near Eastern Apocalypticism and the Origins of the New Testament Canon of Scripture," in *The Bible as a Human Witness: Hearing the Word of God through Historically Dissimilar Traditions*, ed. R. Heskett & B. Irwin; T. & T. Clark, 2010, 302-21.

- _____, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition*, Eerdmans, 1986.
- Oswalt, J. N., "Canonical Criticism: A Review from a Conservative Viewpoint," *JETS* 30 (1987), 317-25.
- Powell, M. A., *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*, Baker Academic, 2009.
- Rendtorff, Rolf., *Canon and Theology: Overtures to an Old Testament Theology*, Fortress, 1993.
- Sanders, J. A., *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, Cornell Uni. Press, 1967.
- _____, *Torah and Canon*, Fortress Press, 1972.
- _____, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism*, Fortress Press, 1984.
- _____, "Canonical Context and Canonical Criticism." *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 2 (1980), 173-97.
- _____, "Canon as Shape and Function," in *The Promise and Practice of Biblical Theology*, ed. J. Reumann; Fortress, 1991, 87-97.
- Schneemelcher, W., ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McLachlan Wilson, Westminster John Knox, 1991.
- Seitz, C., *The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible*, Baker Academic, 2011, 27-91.
- _____, *The Elder Testament. Canon, Theology, Trinity*, Baylor Uni. Press, 2018.
- Sheppard, G., "Canon," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. L. Jones et al. 2nd ed. Macmillan, 2005, 1405-11.
- _____, "Canon Criticism: The Proposal of Brevard Childs and an Assessment for Evangelical Hermeneutics," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 4 (1974), 3-17.
- Smith, W. C., *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach*, SCM, 1993.
- Ulrich, E., "The Notion and Definition of Canon," in *The Canon Debate*,

ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders, Hendrickson Publishers, 2002, 21-35.

Wang, Tai-il, "Scripture-logy and Scriptural Performance in Canonical Criticism and the Theistic Confucian Thought," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Korea*, ed. Won W. Lee, Oxford University Press, 2022, 53-66.

<초록>

동아시아 경전론으로 다시 보는 정경론 논쟁

김정우

(한국신학정보연구원)

역대 불교 조시들의 어록을 기록한 <속전등록>(續傳燈錄)에 따르면, “산은 산이요, 물은 물이다”라는 유명한 화두는 원래 당나라 선사 청원 유신(靑原 惟信)의 계송(偈頌)에서 나왔다고 한다. 그는 자신의 깨달음의 과정을 다음과 같이 말한다. “내가 30년 전 아직 참선을 하지 않았을 때, 산을 보니 산이요(見山是山) 물을 보니 물이었다(見水是水). 나중에 어진 스승을 만난 후에 알고 보니, 산을 봐도 산이 아니요(見山不是山), 물을 보아도 물이 아니었다(見水不是水). 그런데 지금 깨닫고 보니 산은 역시 산이요(見山祇是山), 물은 역시 물이로다(見水祇是水).” 그의 계송을 지난 2000년 동안의 성서해석사에 적용한다면, 비평학 이전에는 “정경은 정경이요, 문화는 문화다”였지만, 역사비평학 시대는 “정경은 문화요, 문화는 정경이다”가 되었고, 후기 비평학 시대에는 “정경은 역시 정경이요, 문화는 역시 문화이다”로 말할 수 있을 것이다. 르피르르는 이 해석학적 순환을 (1) 순박한 깨달음의 순간, (2) 해석적 의심의 비평적 순간, (3) 비평적 이후의 변증법적 통합의 순간으로 새롭게 말하며, 월터 브루거만(1989)은 이 세번째 모델을 ‘정경 해석학’에서 차일즈와 샌더스에게 적용한다..

필자는 약 40년 전 차일즈와 샌더스로부터 시작된 정경론 논쟁을 그들의 제자들과 지지자들의 주장과 함께 돌아보며 동아시아적 전망을 함께 제시해 보고자 한다. 서론에서 정경론 논쟁에 대한 핵심적 쟁점을 개괄한 후에 먼저 구약과 신약의 정경에 대한 정의와 정경의 성격의 문제를 다루고자 한다.

이어서 그는 정경 형성에서 ‘외재적 모델’과 ‘내재적 모델’을 대비하며, 정경으로서 성경에 대한 해석에 있어서 샌더스와 차일즈의 입장을 대비하고자 한다. 샌더스와 차일즈는 각각 자신의 해석적 방법론에 대한 명칭에 있어서 ‘정경적 비평’과 ‘정경적 접근’으로 대비되며, 핵심 초점에서 ‘정경적 과정’과 ‘최종 형태’로 대비되며, 정경의 성격에 있어서 ‘적응성’ 및 ‘안정성’과 ‘하나님 계시의 수단’으로 대비된다. 이어서 두 석학의 제자들과 지지자들의 입장을 간추려 제시한 후, 저자는 동아시아적 경전론의 관점에서 네 가지로 정리한다. (1) ‘정경 의식’은 종교 문헌들이 처음 ‘권위 있는 말씀’으로 선포된 순간부터(구전과 기록에서) 최종 형태에 이르기까지 깊이 자리 잡고 있었다. (2) 정경의 정의에 있어서 ‘민음의 규칙’으로서 정경은 정경 성장의 과정을 강조하며, ‘목록으로서의 정경’은 최종적이고 확정되며, 표준화된 텍스트를 강조하므로 서로 이분법으로 대립시킬 필요가 없어 보인다. (3) 정경의 모델에서 ‘내재적 모델’은 ‘외재적 모델’보다 ‘경전’의 성격에 더 어울리는 것으로 보인다. (4) 끝으로 성경의 존재론은 하나님께서 그의 말씀으로 ‘성육신하고’, ‘성문화한 것’으로 제시할 수 있을 것이다.

<Abstracts>

Revisiting the Canon Debates and Beyond with Reference to the East-Asian Canonics

Jungwoo Kim

(IKTINOS)

Cheongwon Youshin, a famous Buddhist monk in the Tang dynasty, described in his famous *Gatha* his pilgrimage of enlightenment as follows: “Before I started my contemplation thirty years ago, ‘to see a mountain, it is a mountain;’ ‘to see a river, it is a river.’ Later after learning from my benevolent teacher, ‘to see a mountain, it is not mountain;’ ‘to see a river, it is a river.’ Now as I am enlightened, ‘to see a mountain, it ought to be mountain;’ ‘to see a river, it ought to be river.’ Applying this *Gatha* to the history of biblical interpretation over last 2,000 years, we may summarize as follows: In the pre-critical period, “to see canon, it is canon; to see culture, it is culture.” In the historical-critical period, “to see canon, it is culture; to see culture, it is canon.” Now as we are enlightened in the post-critical period, “to see canon, it is to be canon; to see culture, it is to be culture.” Walter Brueggemann (1989) rephrases this hermeneutical circle in terms of three moments of understanding formulated by Ricoeur as (1) the moment of naïve understanding, (2) the critical moment with the hermeneutics of suspicion (conscious distanciation), and (3) the post-critical moment (dialectical synthesis), placing B. S. Childs and James Sanders as belonging to the third moment in their canonical interpretation.

Based on Brueggemann’s observation, the author aims to revisit

the canon debate initiated by Childs and J. A. Sanders about four decades ago, together with their adherents and followers in the biblical studies both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. After mapping out the overall key issues in the debates, the author delves into the problem of the definition and nature of the Jewish and Christian canon. He then presents the two competing models in shaping canon as an extrinsic model versus intrinsic model, followed by two competing approaches to the interpretation of canon between Sanders and Childs in terms of differences in the naming of their ways of interpretation (canonical criticism versus canonical approach), the differences in focus (canonical process versus final form), and the differences in the nature of Canon (adaptability and stability versus vehicle of God's revelation). Next, the author sheds some light on the Western canonical debates from an East Asian perspective in the diverse issues on definition, model, status, and nature of the biblical canon.

Finally, the author provides the following East Asian contribution to the canon debate. (1) "Canonical consciousness" lies deep within the religious literature from the inception of authoritative *utterance* through the canonizing process to the final shape. (2) It seems unnecessary to fall into a dichotomy in the definition of "canon as a rule of faith" (process) versus "canon as a list" (final, fixed, standardized, closed text). (3) The intrinsic model of canon is preferable to the extrinsic model of canon. (4) We may identify the ontology of the biblical canon as the incarnation and inscripturation of God in his Word.