

# Old Testament Scholarship and the Religious-Philosophical Sense of "Life" in Ordinary Language<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*The word "life" appears in a variety of contexts in Old Testament (OT) scholarship. Included are the use of non-technical senses from ordinary language and the associated folk-philosophical assumptions implicit therein. This article investigates whether and to what extent the recent history of interpretation reflects what the philosopher of religion Don Cupitt refers to as the "turn to life" in everyday speech. To test the hypothesis, samples of the relevant data are selected from the related second-order discourses of popular Bible translations and prominent theologies of the OT. The analysis shows strong correlations in terms of quantitative and qualitative conceptual-historical diachronic variability. Thus, it is concluded that the emergent quasi-religious sense of "life" in ordinary language is also a supervening folk-philosophical concept, concern and category in contemporary OT scholarship.*

**Keywords:** Old Testament scholarship, Life (ordinary language), Life (Old Testament scholarship), Life (philosophy of religion)

## A INTRODUCTION

In Old Testament (OT) scholarship, the word "life" is both a term of art and a fuzzy concept, the meanings of which vary in different contexts of discourse.

- 1) In the first-order religious language of the OT itself, a long, rich and complicated conceptual-history lies behind the most familiar Hebrew word in different worlds of the text.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution is dedicated to Gerrie Snyman in celebration of his life and in honour of his life's work.

<sup>2</sup> Helmer Ringgren, 'חַיָּה *chāyāh* חַי *chai*; חַיִּים *chaiyūm*; חַיָּה *chaiyāh*; מִחַיָּה *michyāh*,' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; trans. J.T. Willis; vol. 4; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980). Gillis Gerleman, 'חַיָּה *hyh* to live,' in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (ed. E. Jenni and C. Westermann; trans. Mark E. Biddle; vol. 1; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).

- 2) In the second-order discourse of the various interpretative approaches in OT scholarship, the concept is polytypical and its nuances as many as the multiplicity of senses encountered within the different auxiliary disciplines informing them.<sup>3</sup>

In ordinary language use, a familiar concept is that of life as a whole and of one's own life in relation thereto. According to the philosopher of religion Don Cupitt, this sense of "life" and "my life" is, however, a relatively recent yet very significant development in conceptual history.<sup>4</sup> What Cupitt calls the "turn to life" has occurred in both religious and secular everyday speech. In this view, we have come to think of life and our own lives in cosmic and existential folk-philosophical ways, comparable to how people of earlier times used to speak of their relationship to "God" or "Ultimate reality." Examples of the reification, personification, objectification and universalisation involved include popular phrases such as "To love life," "Such is life," "How's life treating you?," "Life has a way of," "Life has taught me," "Life is good," "Life is sacred," "Life is not fair," "The best things in life are free," "It's my life," "True to life," "What do you want from life?," "Don't waste your life," "Life's great mysteries," "Get a

<sup>3</sup> The scope of the literature in which there is some or other relations to "life" beyond the linguistic dimensions is vast and a detailed literature review is not only a digression from the main concern but impossible to provide. For the use of the word in different contexts, see, e.g., *inter alia*, Lorenz Diirr, *Die Wertung des Lebens im Alten Testament und im antiken Orient: Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung des Segens des viertes Gebotes* (Münster L.W.: Asschendorf, 1926); Peter Riede, „Noch einmal: Was ist ‚Leben‘ im Alten Testament?“ *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119 (2007):416-420; Helmuth Utzschneider, „Zum Verständnis des Lebens im Alten Testament: Ein Glossar mit sechs Stichworten,“ *GILern* 19 (2004):118-124. Kathrin Liess, *Der Weg des Lebens. Psalm 16 und das Lebens- und Todesverständnis der Individualpsalmen* (FAT II/5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) and Kathrin Liess, „Leben,“ n.p. [cited 6 June 2021]. Online: <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/24713/>. See also James A. Loader, "Emptied Life: Death as the Reverse of Life in Ancient Israel," *Old Testament Essays* 18/3 (2005):681-702. Thomas Pola, „Was ist ‚Leben‘ im Alten Testament?“ *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116 (2004):251-252. Konrad Schmid, "Fülle des Lebens oder erfülltes Leben? Religionsgeschichtliche und theologische Überlegungen zur Lebensthematik im Alten Testament," n.p. [cited 12 July 2021]. ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-68149>; Albert Coetsee, "YHWH and Israel in Terms of the Concept of Life in Deuteronomy," *OTE* 32/1 (2019):101-126. More examples could be added to this list but those given should suffice to make the point intended.

<sup>4</sup> Don Cupitt, *The New Religion of Life in Everyday Speech* (London: SCM Press, 1999); Don Cupitt, *Life, Life* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2003); Don Cupitt, *The Way to Happiness* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2005); Don Cupitt, *The Great Questions of Life* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press 2006); Don Cupitt, *Impossible Loves* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press 2007); Don Cupitt, *Above Us Only Sky* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2008); Don Cupitt, *Theology's Strange Return* (London: SCM Press, 2010).

life" and many more (including the way the verb "live" and the adjective "living," all part of what are now very serious manners of speaking).<sup>5</sup>

Though making general claims about how "we" think nowadays, Cupitt acknowledges the historical and cultural relative nature of his Western/English "take on life" and its religious-philosophical sense. Perhaps that is why, extending the tradition of Nietzsche (genealogy), Wittgenstein (ordinary language philosophy) and Foucault (archaeology) on the value of micro-histories of concepts, Cupitt writes:

Before long, someone must attempt the first history of life, reviewing the manifold ways in which people have seen life and their own lives in different periods and under different systems of thought – how people feel about life as a whole, and about their life in particular is different from certain related ideas.<sup>6</sup>

What is in view here is clearly different from writing a scientific narrative about the origins and development of life as told from a cosmological or biological perspective. It is also not to be confused with anthropological and sociological accounts of different forms of human life or culture over time. In the context of OT scholarship in particular, such an inquiry is related to but ultimately not the same as traditional linguistic, literary-critical, comparative-religious, religious-historical and theological perspectives of the concept. On the one hand, Cupitt's perspective would have us consider the ways OT scholars have used of the word "life" in the recent history of OT interpretation. On the other hand, of interest would be whether and in what ways the ordinary language of life in our second-order discourses might have come to mirror the "turn to life" as a religious-philosophical concept, concern and category.

## **B RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research problem identified in this article is constituted by the lack of OT scholarship on the relation of its second-order discourses to the conceptual-historical changes outlined above. The corresponding research question involves asking if and how the words "life" and "my life" in its religious-philosophical sense appear within the contexts of specific interpretative approaches. The hypothesis of this study is that the recent history of OT scholars' recourse to ordinary language is likely to reflect an increased quantity and quality of the associated folk-philosophical presuppositions, problems and perspectives on

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<sup>5</sup> Cupitt, *The Way to Happiness*, 2-3. Philosophically and historically, Cupitt's method involves mixing elements from similar concerns in the writings of Western male philosophers like Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Foucault and others (including non-philosophers). Constructively, Cupitt goes further to provide other prescriptive conclusions incorporating also Derrida, Rorty and Zen Buddhist philosophical ideas.

<sup>6</sup> Cupitt, *Impossible Loves*, 47.

“life” as a religious-philosophical concept, concern and category. The method adopted for the purpose of application and illustration will be that of a descriptive (rather than critical) meta-commentary operating in tandem with historical and comparative varieties of philosophy of religion. The objective of the study is to determine the nature and scope of any apparent conceptual-historical correlations within selected samples of data. As will become apparent in the discussion to follow, the research presented here relates to other intra- and interdisciplinary discussions of “life” in/and the OT (scholarship) in a variety of supplementary and complimentary ways. In these variables of the research design lies its originality, relevance and actuality.

## **C RESEARCH SAMPLES**

Since it is impossible to analyse all potentially relevant data, the samples selected for this preliminary investigation will come from two contexts where the word “life” (in different configurations) and any related conceptual-history changes are likely to be present. This includes the second-order discourse at the most basic level of analytic interests (i.e., references to “my life” in Bible translations) and on the highest level of attempts at conceptual synthesis (i.e., references to “life” in OT theology). Any findings pertaining to the partial set of samples that could be accommodated from these dense and complex domains of discourse are limited in scope and do not warrant untested generalisation or extrapolation.

### **1 “My life” and the meta-languages of some popular translations of the OT**

In the context of Bible translations, the preliminary inquiry focuses on samples from one older and one more recent version, namely the KJV and the NRSV. The general philosophical background contexts of both versions are well known.<sup>7</sup> The references to “my life” listed correlate with texts in the MT of BHS based on verbatim occurrences of the common masculine plural noun אִנְיָ in the construct state with first person singular suffix (אִנְיָ). Further qualifications and acknowledgements related to grammar, semantics and pragmatics are provided in the subsequent comments.

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<sup>7</sup> For the philosophical background that shaped the initial translation early in the 17th century but before Descartes and the theoretical beginning of the modern-era, see Henrik Lagerlund, *The Routledge Companion to Sixteenth Century Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2017). For a useful introduction of the diffused and complex historical situation with American pragmatist, process and linguistic philosophy preceding the NRSV and indirectly influential on the religious-philosophical assumptions of the time as well as OT theology, see David Boersema, “American Philosophy,” *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, n.p. [cited 2 July 2021]. Online: <https://iep.utm.edu/american/>.

MT (BHS) (21)	KJV (44/43)	NRSV (80)
<p>1. ותאמר רבקה אל-יצחק מציתי בחיני-מפני בנות חת אמ-לקח יעקב אשה מבנות חת כאלה מבנות הארץ למה לי חיים.</p>	<p>1. Gen 19:19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving <b>my life</b>.</p>	<p>1. Gen 12:12 Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that <b>my life</b> may be spared on your account."</p>
<p>2. ויאמר יעקב אל-פרעה ומי שני מגורי שלשים ומאת שנה מעט ורעים היו ומי שני חיי ולא השיגו את-מי שני חיי אבתי בימי מגורייהם</p>	<p>2. Gen 27:46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of <b>my life</b> because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall <b>my life</b> do me?</p> <p>3. Gen 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and <b>my life</b> is preserved.</p>	<p>2. Gen 19:19 your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>3. Gen 19:20 Look, that city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and <b>my life</b> will be saved!"</p> <p>4. Gen 27:46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of <b>my life</b> because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will <b>my life</b> be to me?"</p> <p>5. Gen 32:30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet <b>my life</b> is preserved."</p>
<p>3. ויאמר דוד אל-שאול מי אנכי ומי חיי משפחת אבי בני ישראל כי-אהיה חסו למלך</p>	<p>4. Gen 47:9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of <b>my life</b> been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.</p>	<p>4. Gen 27:46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of <b>my life</b> because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will <b>my life</b> be to me?"</p> <p>5. Gen 32:30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet <b>my life</b> is preserved."</p> <p>6. Gen 44:32 For your servant became surety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I will bear the blame in the sight of my father all <b>my life</b>.'</p>
<p>4. ויאמר המלך אל-ברנולי אתה עבר אתי וכלפילתי אתך עמדי בירושלם.</p>	<p>5. Gen 48:15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all <b>my life</b> long unto this day,</p>	<p>7. Gen 47:9 Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my earthly sojourn are one hundred thirty; few and hard have been the years of <b>my life</b>. They do not compare with the years of the life of my ancestors during their long sojourn."</p>
<p>5. ודף אויב נפשי וישג וירמס לארץ חיי וכבודי לעפר ישפן</p>	<p>6. Judg 12:3 And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put <b>my life</b> in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?</p>	<p>8. Gen 48:15 He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all <b>my life</b> to this day,</p> <p>9. Judg 12:3 When I saw that you would not deliver me, I took <b>my life</b> in my hand, and crossed over against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day, to fight against me?"</p>
<p>6. ודף אויב נפשי וישג וירמס לארץ חיי וכבודי לעפר ישפן</p>	<p>7. 1 Sam 18:18 And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is <b>my life</b>, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?</p>	<p>10. 1 Sam 20:1 The Friendship of David and Jonathan David fled from Naioth in Ramah. He came before Jonathan and said, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin against your father that he is trying to take <b>my life</b>?"</p>
<p>7. אל-תאסף עם חטאים נפשי ועם-אנשי דמים חיי</p>	<p>8. 1 Sam 20:1 And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh <b>my life</b>?</p>	<p>11. 1 Sam 22:23 Stay with me, and do not be afraid; for the one who seeks <b>my life</b> seeks your life; you will be safe with me."</p>
<p>8. ודף אויב נפשי וישג וירמס לארץ חיי וכבודי לעפר ישפן</p>	<p>9. 1 Sam 22:23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh <b>my life</b> seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.</p>	<p>12. 1 Sam 24:11. I have not sinned against you, though you are hunting me to take <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>13. 1 Sam 26:21 Then Saul said, "I have done wrong; come back, my son David, for I will never harm you again, because <b>my life</b> was precious in your sight today; I have been a fool, and have made a great mistake."</p>
<p>9. ודף אויב נפשי וישג וירמס לארץ חיי וכבודי לעפר ישפן</p>	<p>10. 1 Sam 26:24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let <b>my life</b> be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.</p>	<p>14. 1 Sam 26:24 As your life was precious today in my sight, so may <b>my life</b> be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he rescue me from all tribulation."</p>
<p>10. ודף אויב נפשי וישג וירמס לארץ חיי וכבודי לעפר ישפן</p>		

<p>11. Ps 42:9 יומם וצונה יהנה חסדו ובלילה שירה עמי תפלה לאל חיי.</p> <p>12. Ps 64:1-2 שמע אלהים קולי בשחי מפחד אויב מצר חיי</p> <p>13. Ps 104:33 אשירה אומרה בחיי ליהנה לאלתי</p> <p>14. Ps 143:3 פי רדף אויב. נפשי דפא לארץ חיי</p> <p>15. Ps 146:2 אהללה יהנה בחיי אומרה לאלתי בעודי</p> <p>16. Isa 38:12 דורי נסע ונגלה מני פאהל רעי; קפדתי כארג חיי מדלה ובצעני</p> <p>17. Lam 3:53 צמתי בבור חיי ונדו-אבן בי</p> <p>18. Lam 3:58 רבת אדני ריבי נפשי גאלתי חיי</p> <p>19. Jonah 2:7 לקצבי הרים ירדתי הארץ ברחיה בעדי לעולם; נתעל משחת חיי יהנה אלתי</p> <p>20. Jonah 4:3 נעתה יהנה קח-נא את- נפשי ממני כי טוב מותי מחיי</p> <p>21. Jonah 4:8 נתם השמש על-ראש יונה ונתעקר; וישאל את-נפשו למות ויאמר טוב מותי מחיי</p>	<p>11. 1 Sam 28:9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for <b>my life</b>, to cause me to die?</p> <p>12. 1 Sam 28:21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put <b>my life</b> in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.</p> <p>13. 2 Sam 1:9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because <b>my life</b> is yet whole in me.</p> <p>14. 2 Sam 16:11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh <b>my life</b>: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.</p> <p>15. 1 Kgs 19:4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away <b>my life</b>; for I am not better than my fathers.</p> <p>16. 1 Kgs 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek <b>my life</b>, to take it away.</p> <p>17. 1 Kgs 19:14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek <b>my life</b>, to take it away.</p> <p>18. 2 Kgs 1:13 And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let <b>my life</b>, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.</p>	<p>15. 1 Sam 28:9 The woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for <b>my life</b> to bring about my death?"</p> <p>16. 1 Sam 28:21 The woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, "Your servant has listened to you; I have taken <b>my life</b> in my hand, and have listened to what you have said to me.</p> <p>17. 2 Sam 1:9 He said to me, 'Come, stand over me and kill me; for convulsions have seized me, and yet <b>my life</b> still lingers.'</p> <p>18. 2 Sam 4:9 David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed <b>my life</b> out of every adversity,</p> <p>19. 2 Sam 16:11 David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "My own son seeks <b>my life</b>; how much more now may this Benjamite! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord has bidden him.</p> <p>20. 1 Kgs 1:29 The king swore, saying, "As the Lord lives, who has saved <b>my life</b> from every adversity,</p> <p>21. 1 Kgs 19:4 "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away <b>my life</b>, for I am no better than my ancestors."</p> <p>22. 1 Kgs 19:10 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking <b>my life</b>, to take it away."</p> <p>23. 1 Kgs 19:14 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking <b>my life</b>, to take it away."</p> <p>24. 2 Kgs 1:13 Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. So the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and entreated him, "O man of God, please let <b>my life</b>, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight.</p> <p>25. 2 Kgs 1:14 Look, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties; but now let <b>my life</b> be precious in your sight."</p> <p>26. Esth 7:3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let <b>my life</b> be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request.</p> <p>27. Job 7:7 "Remember that <b>my life</b> is a breath; my eye will never again see good.</p> <p>28. Job 7:16 I loathe <b>my life</b>; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath.</p> <p>29. Job 9:21 I am blameless; I do not know myself; I loathe <b>my life</b>.</p>
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	<p>19. 2 Kgs 1:14 Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let <b>my life</b> now be precious in thy sight.</p> <p>20. Esth 7:3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let <b>my life</b> be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:</p> <p>21. Job 6:11 What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong <b>my life</b>?</p> <p>22. Job 7:7 remember that <b>my life</b> is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.</p> <p>23. Job 7:15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>24. Job 9:21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>25. Job 10:1 My soul is weary of <b>my life</b>; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.</p> <p>26. Job 13:14 Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put <b>my life</b> in mine hand?</p> <p>27. Ps 7:5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down <b>my life</b> upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.</p> <p>28. Ps 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of <b>my life</b>: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.</p> <p>29. Ps 26:9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor <b>my life</b> with bloody men:</p> <p>30. Ps 27:1 [[A Ps. of David.]] The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of <b>my life</b>; of whom shall I be afraid?</p> <p>31. Ps 27:4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of <b>my life</b>, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.</p> <p>32. Ps 31:10 For <b>my life</b> is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of</p>	<p>30. Job 10:1 "I loathe <b>my life</b>; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.</p> <p>31. Job 10:20 Are not the days of <b>my life</b> few? Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort</p> <p>32. Job 13:14 I will take my flesh in my teeth, and put <b>my life</b> in my hand.</p> <p>33. Job 33:28 He has redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit, and <b>my life</b> shall see the light.'</p> <p>34. Ps 6:4 Turn, O Lord, save <b>my life</b>; deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.</p> <p>35. Ps 7:5 then let the enemy pursue and overtake me, trample <b>my life</b> to the ground, and lay my soul in the dust.Selah</p> <p>36. Ps 17:13 Rise up, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them! By your sword deliver <b>my life</b> from the wicked,</p> <p>37. Ps 22:20 Deliver my soul from the sword, <b>my life</b> from the power of the dog!</p> <p>38. Ps 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of <b>my life</b>, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.</p> <p>39. Ps 25:20 O guard <b>my life</b>, and deliver me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.</p> <p>40. Ps 26:9 Do not sweep me away with sinners, nor <b>my life</b> with the bloodthirsty,</p> <p>41. Ps 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of <b>my life</b>; of whom shall I be afraid?</p> <p>42. Ps 27:4 One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of <b>my life</b>, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.</p> <p>43. Ps 31:10 For <b>my life</b> is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.</p> <p>44. Ps 31:13 For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>45. Ps 35:4 Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after <b>my life</b>. Let them be turned back and confounded who devise evil against me.</p> <p>46. Ps 35:7 For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>47. Ps 35:17 How long, O Lord, will you look on? Rescue me from their ravages, <b>my life</b> from the lions!</p> <p>48. Ps 38:12 Those who seek <b>my life</b> lay their snares; those who seek to hurt me speak of ruin, and meditate treachery all day long.</p> <p>49. Ps 39:4 "Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting <b>my life</b> is.</p>
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	<p>mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.</p> <p>33. Ps 31:13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>34. Ps 38:12 They also that seek after <b>my life</b> lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.</p> <p>35. Ps 42:8 Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>36. Ps 64:1 To the chief Musician, A Ps. of David.]] Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve <b>my life</b> from fear of the enemy.</p> <p>37. Ps 88:3 For my soul is full of troubles: and <b>my life</b> draweth nigh unto the grave.</p> <p>38. Ps 143:3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten <b>my life</b> down to the ground;</p> <p>39. Isa 38:12 Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver <b>my life</b>:</p> <p>40. Lam 3:53 They have cut off <b>my life</b> in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.</p> <p>41. Lam 3:58 Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>42. Jonah 2:6: yet hast thou brought up <b>my life</b> from corruption, O LORD my God.</p> <p>43. Jonah 4:3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, <b>my life</b> from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.</p>	<p>50. Ps 39:5 You have made my days a few handbreadths, and <b>my lifetime</b> is as nothing in your sight. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath.</p> <p>51. Ps 40:14 Let all those be put to shame and confusion who seek to snatch away <b>my life</b>; let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire my hurt.</p> <p>52. Ps 42:8 By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>53. Ps 54:3 For the insolent have risen against me, the ruthless seek <b>my life</b>; they do not set God before them.Selah</p> <p>54. Ps 54:4 But surely, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>55. Ps 56:6 They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps. As they hoped to have <b>my life</b></p> <p>56. Ps 59:3 Even now they lie in wait for <b>my life</b>; the mighty stir up strife against me. For no transgression or sin of mine, O Lord,</p> <p>57. Ps 63:9 But those who seek to destroy <b>my life</b> shall go down into the depths of the earth;</p> <p>58. Ps 64:1 To the leader. A Ps. of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve <b>my life</b> from the dread enemy.</p> <p>59. Ps 70:2 Let those be put to shame and confusion who seek <b>my life</b>. Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire to hurt me.</p> <p>60. Ps 71:10 For my enemies speak concerning me, and those who watch for <b>my life</b> consult together.</p> <p>61. Ps 86:2 Preserve <b>my life</b>, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God;</p> <p>62. Ps 86:14 O God, the insolent rise up against me; a band of ruffians seeks <b>my life</b>, and they do not set you before them.</p> <p>63. Ps 88:3 For my soul is full of troubles, and <b>my life</b> draws near to Sheol.</p> <p>64. Ps 102:24 "O my God," I say, "do not take me away at the midpoint of <b>my life</b>, you whose years endure throughout all generations."</p> <p>65. Ps 109:20 May that be the reward of my accusers from the Lord, of those who speak evil against <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>66. Ps 116:4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, save <b>my life</b>!"</p> <p>67. Ps 119:88 In your steadfast love spare <b>my life</b>, so that I may keep the decrees of your mouth.</p> <p>68. Ps 119:109 I hold <b>my life</b> in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law.</p>
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		<p>69. Ps 119:149 In your steadfast love hear my voice; O Lord, in your justice preserve <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>70. Ps 119:159 Consider how I love your precepts; preserve <b>my life</b> according to your steadfast love.</p> <p>71. Ps 143:3 For the enemy has pursued me, crushing <b>my life</b> to the ground, making me sit in darkness like those long dead.</p> <p>72. Ps 143:11 For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve <b>my life</b>. In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.</p> <p>73. Ps 146:2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all <b>my life</b> long.</p> <p>74. Isa 38:12 My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver I have rolled up <b>my life</b>; he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night you bring me to an end;</p> <p>75. Isa 38:17 Surely it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but you have held back <b>my life</b> from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.</p> <p>76. Jer 18:20 Is evil a recompense for good? Yet they have dug a pit for <b>my life</b>. Remember how I stood before you to speak good for them, to turn away your wrath from them.</p> <p>77. Lam 3:58 You have taken up my cause, O Lord, you have redeemed <b>my life</b>.</p> <p>78. Jonah 2:6 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up <b>my life</b> from the Pit, O Lord my God.</p> <p>79. Jonah 2:7 As <b>my life</b> was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.</p> <p>80. Jonah 4:3 And now, O Lord, please take <b>my life</b> from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."</p>
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To be sure, correlation does not mean causation and numbers are not in themselves meaningful. That being said, it cannot be denied that within this data set there is clearly a statistically significant variation in both the quantity and quality of the ways in which the words "my life" appears. Whereas the MT only has 21 instances of the noun, as constructed above, the KJV has 64 references to "my life" and the NRSV which is the more recent 80. Though there is a slight variation in the versification of the Hebrew and English at some points, the only texts where "my life" appears in all three contexts, i.e., the MT, KJV and NRSV are Gen 27:46; 47:9; Isa 38:12; Pss 7:5; 23:6; 26:9; 27:1, 4; 31:10, 13; 42:8; 64:1; 143:3; Lam 3:58; and Jonah 2:6; 4:3. Double occurrences involving the MT and at least one or the other English translation but not both include 1 Sam 18:18; Ps 38:12; Isa 38:12; Lam 3:53 (MT and KJV) and Ps 146:2 (MT and NRSV).

Of potential significance and interest also is how, on several occasions, the expression "my life" appears verbatim only in the English translation (Gen 32:30; 1 Sam 20:1; 20:23; 26:24; 28:21, 9; 2 Sam 16:11; 1 Kgs 19:4, 10, 14; 2 Kgs 1:13; Esth 7:3; Job 7:15-16; 9:21; 10:1; 13:14; Pss 27:1, 4; 31:10, 13; 88:3). Sometimes, only one of the three versions of the OT (HB) has the associated wording, e.g. the MT in 2 Sam 19:34 and Jonah 4:8, the KJV in Gen 19:19 and by far the largest number of cases is in the NRSV (Gen 12:12; 19:20; 44:32; 1 Sam 24:11; 26:21; 2 Sam 4:9; 1 Kgs 1:29; 2 Kgs 1:14 (2); Jonah 2:7; Job 6:11; 7:7; 10:20; 33:28; Pss 6:4; 17:13; 22:20; 25:20; 35:4, 7, 17, 38:12; 39:4, 5, 54:3, 4; 56:6; 59:3; 63:9; 70:2; 71:10; 86:2, 14; 102:24; 109:20; 116:4; 119:88, 109, 149, 159; 143:11; Isa 38:17; Jer 38:20).

One way to account for the diachronic discrepancies is of course to note the more dynamic equivalent styles of translation in the NRSV in relation to the KJV. However, this would only confirm the supervening influence of the folk-philosophical assumptions about life in ordinary language as being meaningful to the implied reader. Another obvious reason for the quantitative differences is later developments in associated research. An example of this would be when "my life" became the terms of choice for rendering other Hebrew words like נַפְשִׁי, previously translated as "my soul" under the influence of Greek Christian philosophical-anthropological assumptions. Though not the only explanatory framework that can account for the new references to "my life" in the NRSV compared with the KJV, the conceptual-historical "turn to life" cannot be ruled out as one sufficient reason that it would have seemed fitting to choose "my life" rather than, for example, "me," "myself" or other overlapping alternatives.

## 2 "Life" in the second-order discourses of OT theologians

The concept of "life" is also popular at the broadest level of synthesis in OT scholarship, namely OT theology.<sup>8</sup> Here, the OT scholar can easily include, more than anywhere else, a variety of senses from both popular ordinary-language and second-order uses of the word "life." As with the remarks on trends related to "my life" in translation, it is impossible to do justice to the sheer quantity of data available. Many scholars' writings relevant to this section therefore could not be included.<sup>9</sup> Fortunately, only a sufficient number of samples is required to

<sup>8</sup> For the variety of presuppositions, problems and perspectives that have characterised the discipline towards the end of the 20th century, see, *inter alia*, Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Revised and expanded third edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Noteworthy absentees include, in alphabetic order, Bernard W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1999); Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (London: SCM Press, 1985); Georg Fischer, *Theologien des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2012); Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Theologies of the Old Testament* (London: T & T Clark

demonstrate the plausibility of the hypothesis in the present context. Being a comparatively younger discipline featuring more idiosyncrasies than translations, the samples will be limited to classic 20th century and popular 21st century publications.<sup>10</sup> Though some cases listed may seem *prima facie* trivial or even "biblical," the question is whether it might turn out on closer inspection that some additional religious-philosophical sense has been imported into even the most familiar expressions.

To start with, the English translation of the German original two-volume publication of Walther Eichrodt contains over 400 occurrences of the word "life" in the first volume, and over 800 in the second.<sup>11</sup> Though some of these appear in the context of quotations from the OT itself or relate to the usual anthropological-ethical concerns, the nuances of meaning (despite some verbal overlap) include more than those of the OT's first-order religious language. Included are repeated references to, among others, "individual life,"<sup>12</sup> "personal

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2002); Jörg Jeremias, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Grundrisse zum Alten Testament 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015). Otto Kaiser, *Der Gott des Alten Testaments: Theologie des Alten Testaments Teil 1: Grundlegung* (UTB 1747; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993) and two subsequent volumes on the extended *Capita Selecta*; Robin Routledge, *Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach* (Nottingham: Apollos Inter-Varsity Press, 2008); Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical and Thematic approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the previous section, the present one will not focus on the first-person perspectives of "my life" but on "life," the primary broader term Cupitt mentions as point of orientation in the inquiry. One reason for the switch is that "my life" is usually not standard in the OT theological meta-language as it is in translation. Moreover, while Cupitt notes the first stirrings of the turn to life in the early modern period, the most noticeable increase in associated phrases and idioms in English can only be dated from the second half of the 20th century to the present. For that reason, the translations of the KJV and NRSV sufficed for the intended purpose whereas here, with OT theology only becoming a separate discipline later, the data set from which samples will be drawn will commence with the so-called classic period associated with the writings of German scholars like Walther Eichrodt and Gerhard von Rad onwards. In the discussion to follow, instead of merely noting the usual concerns with life in publications dealing with conceptions of the person or life as a divine attribute, gift or such, the focus will be on those elements in second-order discourse most related to the ontological and axiological dimensions of the religious-philosophical turn to life in contemporary ordinary language.

<sup>11</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Vol. 1; Trans. J.A. Baker; London: SCM Press, 1961), Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Vol. 2; Trans. J.A. Baker; London: SCM Press, 1967).

<sup>12</sup> Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* I, 327.

life,"<sup>13</sup> "critique of daily life,"<sup>14</sup> "secular life,"<sup>15</sup> "purpose of his life," "a whole life's work,"<sup>16</sup> "to succeed during life,"<sup>17</sup> "religious life,"<sup>18</sup> "a life of their own,"<sup>19</sup> "lifetime,"<sup>20</sup> "life's riddles,"<sup>21</sup> "man's interior life,"<sup>22</sup> "the stuff of life,"<sup>23</sup> "a permanent life-relationship,"<sup>24</sup> "independent life of the universe," "marvellous life,"<sup>25</sup> "universal life,"<sup>26</sup> "the autonomous life of nature,"<sup>27</sup> "a cosmos with laws proper to its own life,"<sup>28</sup> "the meaning of his life,"<sup>29</sup> "the life of the whole community,"<sup>30</sup> "the fullness of life,"<sup>31</sup> "nomadic life,"<sup>32</sup> "spiritual life,"<sup>33</sup> "mastery of life," "the problems of life,"<sup>34</sup> "a right to a life,"<sup>35</sup> "enriching life," "goods of life,"<sup>36</sup> "unity of life," "precious things of life," "life-span,"<sup>37</sup> "conscious life,"<sup>38</sup> "sexual life,"<sup>39</sup> "true life" and so on.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 345.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>15</sup> Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament II*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 45

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 69

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 35

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>40</sup> Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols, passim. It would be impractical to list all the page numbers of every occurrence of each of these words and phrases in the footnotes to this study. There are just too many. A word search on an electronic version of the publications will identify the exact page numbers for anyone interested in further details.

In the first two volumes of Gerhard von Rad's *Old Testament Theology*,<sup>41</sup> the English translations feature 383 and 163 occurrences of the word "life," respectively. Both idiosyncratic and making use of common stock phrases in second-order discourse, these include "economic life,"<sup>42</sup> "whole life,"<sup>43</sup> "common life,"<sup>44</sup> "civil life,"<sup>45</sup> "the life of the community,"<sup>46</sup> "life at a point in time,"<sup>47</sup> "settled life,"<sup>48</sup> "nomadic life,"<sup>49</sup> "cultic life,"<sup>50</sup> "human life,"<sup>51</sup> "sacral life," "internal life,"<sup>52</sup> "individual life,"<sup>53</sup> "the religious life,"<sup>54</sup> "social life,"<sup>55</sup> "dedication for life,"<sup>56</sup> "lifelong,"<sup>57</sup> Others are "real life situation,"<sup>58</sup> "Israel's life,"<sup>59</sup> "spiritual life,"<sup>60</sup> "experience of life,"<sup>61</sup> "national life,"<sup>62</sup> "spheres of her life,"<sup>63</sup> "way of life,"<sup>64</sup> "life possessed,"<sup>65</sup> "breaking into life,"<sup>66</sup> "a life of toil," "what hampers life,"<sup>67</sup> "secular life,"<sup>68</sup> "moral life,"<sup>69</sup> "emotional life,"<sup>70</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology.: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (Vol 1. Trans. D.M.G. Stalker; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1968); Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions* (Vol. 2; Trans. D.M.G. Stalker; London: SCM Press, 1975).

<sup>42</sup> Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* 2, 23.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>46</sup> Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* 1, 5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

"peaceful life,"<sup>71</sup> "inner life,"<sup>72</sup> "everyday life,"<sup>73</sup> "stage in life,"<sup>74</sup> "home life,"<sup>75</sup> "natural life,"<sup>76</sup> "the material side of life,"<sup>77</sup> "departments of life,"<sup>78</sup> "the idea of life,"<sup>79</sup> "value in life,"<sup>80</sup> "personal life,"<sup>81</sup> "this life,"<sup>82</sup> "mastering life,"<sup>83</sup> "make life worth living," "meaning of life,"<sup>84</sup> "insecurity of life,"<sup>85</sup> "life as a whole"<sup>86</sup> and many more.

In the English translation of Preuss's OT theology, the word "life" appears 117 times in Volume 1 and 269 times in Volume 2.<sup>87</sup> Despite continuing use of certain from-critical and biological/theological/anthropological/sociological/psychological concepts, new phrases and distinctions are attested. Though sometimes mimicking the interests or first-order religious language of the text, again a subtle variation in associative meaning can be detected and correlated with folk-philosophical categories of ordinary language. Included are familiar and idiosyncratic references to "actual life,"<sup>88</sup> "dimensions of its life,"<sup>89</sup> "foundation of their life,"<sup>90</sup> "signs for life (law as),"<sup>91</sup> "instruction for life,"<sup>92</sup> "lifelessness,"<sup>93</sup> "non-political life,"<sup>94</sup> "enjoyment of life,"<sup>95</sup> "diminishment of

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 458.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 379.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 418.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 455.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 456.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 458.

<sup>87</sup> Horst-Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (Vol. I; Old Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Horst-Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (Vol II; Old Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

<sup>88</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol I, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 230.

the power of life,"<sup>96</sup> "structures of life,"<sup>97</sup> "this life,"<sup>98</sup> "earthly life,"<sup>99</sup> "future life,"<sup>100</sup> "life embedded in the flow of time,"<sup>101</sup> "Eastern life"<sup>102</sup> and many more.<sup>103</sup>

In the OT theology of Walter Brueggemann,<sup>104</sup> the word "life" appears even less—only 92 times—yet again with over and underlapping relations to earlier usages. Thus, we find "modes of mediation and life with Yhwh,"<sup>105</sup> "all that diminishes life,"<sup>106</sup> "back to real life,"<sup>107</sup> "all life – cosmic, political, personal,"<sup>108</sup> "candid as life itself,"<sup>109</sup> "an ordered life,"<sup>110</sup> "large as life,"<sup>111</sup> "gratitude that life is,"<sup>112</sup> "the sacramental freightedness of all of life,"<sup>113</sup> "the mystery of life,"<sup>114</sup> "makes life possible,"<sup>115</sup> "the dailiness of life in all of its density,"<sup>116</sup> "close to its own life,"<sup>117</sup> "defeat, loss and forfeiture of life" and "event in the life of this community."<sup>118</sup> Others are "practice life of faith in exile,"<sup>119</sup> "life with Yhwh,"<sup>120</sup> "life that endures," "life that resumes,"<sup>121</sup> "daily life,"<sup>122</sup> "every sphere of life,"<sup>123</sup> "its own life,"<sup>124</sup> "zone of life,"<sup>125</sup> "what makes

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>103</sup> Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols, passim.

<sup>104</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

<sup>105</sup> Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 33.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 661.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 611.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 661.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 661.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 745.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 746.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 435.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 429.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 435.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 483.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 599.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 288.

life possible,"<sup>126</sup> "guarantee of life,"<sup>127</sup> "mediation of the ordinariness of life,"<sup>128</sup> "all of life constitutes an undifferentiated arena," "public life,"<sup>129</sup> "reduction of all human life to technique,"<sup>130</sup> "life in relation to Yhwh," "issues in Yahweh's life,"<sup>131</sup> "life beyond abandonment,"<sup>132</sup> "definitional life of the system,"<sup>133</sup> "authorising the life of these partners,"<sup>134</sup> "basis for life in the world,"<sup>135</sup> "life of vulnerability,"<sup>136</sup> "sovereign ordering of life,"<sup>137</sup> "left much of life unaccounted for,"<sup>138</sup> "life-space,"<sup>139</sup> "Israel's life as theological enterprise"<sup>140</sup> and others.<sup>141</sup>

The second volume in John Goldingay's<sup>142</sup> OT theological trilogy has "Israel's life" as part of its title. In this book, the word "life" appears 89 times. Examples include "life in relation to God,"<sup>143</sup> "purpose of life,"<sup>144</sup> "life is worth living," "life is short,"<sup>145</sup> "the good life,"<sup>146</sup> "the right kind of life,"<sup>147</sup> "life in community,"<sup>148</sup> "full human life," "family life,"<sup>149</sup> "given up life,"<sup>150</sup> "outward life," "what counts in life,"<sup>151</sup> "the complexities of life,"<sup>152</sup> "permanent feature

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 688.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 556.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 722.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*. Though Brueggemann's choice of second-order religious language includes many idiosyncratic expressions, it cannot avoid recourse to the idiomatic framework of the philosophy of life in everyday speech.

<sup>142</sup> See John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology 2: Israel's Life* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010). Cf. Bernd Janowski, *Der Gott des Lebens* (Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments 3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003).

<sup>143</sup> Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology Vol 2*, 16.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 637.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 912.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 395.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 634.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 602.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.

of life,"<sup>153</sup> "our life with God," "our life with one another," "our life with as selves,"<sup>154</sup> "life with other people,"<sup>155</sup> "life as a self,"<sup>156</sup> "the implications for Israel's life,"<sup>157</sup> "ongoing life,"<sup>158</sup> "individual human life,"<sup>159</sup> "all life is at every moment an ultimate act,"<sup>160</sup> "the proper way of life,"<sup>161</sup> "everyday life,"<sup>162</sup> "religious life,"<sup>163</sup> "empty life,"<sup>164</sup> "thinking, attitudes and life,"<sup>165</sup> "life expectancy," "life or the world in general can be unfair,"<sup>166</sup> among others.<sup>167</sup>

Our last example comes from the recent English translation of the German publication by Konrad Schmid.<sup>168</sup> Here, the word life appears only 46 times, with most phrases already part of the now common stock and with less idiosyncratic tendencies, despite the odd variation and novelty. These include "way of life,"<sup>169</sup> "possibility for life,"<sup>170</sup> "concrete way of life,"<sup>171</sup> "fundamental life,"<sup>172</sup> "circumstances of life,"<sup>173</sup> "all of life's adversities,"<sup>174</sup> "everyday life,"<sup>175</sup> "violence against life,"<sup>176</sup> "human life,"<sup>177</sup> "guarantee of life,"<sup>178</sup> "animal life,"<sup>179</sup> "economic life,"<sup>180</sup> "framework of a retrospective life's work," "life of

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 630.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 638.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 613.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 802.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 682.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*. See footnote 10 on further details for page numbers.

<sup>168</sup> Konrad Schmid, *A Historical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Trans. Peter Altmann; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019).

<sup>169</sup> Schmid, *A Historical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, 193.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 412.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

a scholar,"<sup>181</sup> "life-antagonistic desert,"<sup>182</sup> "life expressions,"<sup>183</sup> "basic precepts of life,"<sup>184</sup> "experience in life,"<sup>185</sup> "profanation of everyday life,"<sup>186</sup> "conduct of human life," "life and faith of a community,"<sup>187</sup> "whole life,"<sup>188</sup> "daily life,"<sup>189</sup> "mundane life," "human life will remain ambivalent," "post-cultic philosophy of life," "theocratic ordering of life,"<sup>190</sup> "permanent life is possible,"<sup>191</sup> "the world of human life,"<sup>192</sup> "public life"<sup>193</sup> and so on.<sup>194</sup>

The associated content from these samples appears indicative of an increased correlation with the "turn to life" on a qualitative rather than a quantitative level. Newly emergent religious-philosophical senses are clearly correlated with corresponding changes in ordinary language over time. Second, popular ways of phrasing ordinary language and its folk-philosophical framework seem to be taken for granted, i.e., "life" as an acceptable and unproblematic religious-philosophical concept, concern and category. This is evident from its location not only in discussions of topics the focus of which lies elsewhere but also from its inclusion in titles, forewords, tables of contents and indices. This includes "life" as somehow a sacred human and divine attribute, function and relation (and of extensions of the divine e.g., the divine spirit). Subsequent references to life are subsumed under traditional loci, e.g., creation, blessing, governance, providence and so forth. Interesting is the ongoing tradition of referring to "the life of Israel" and other "non-living" social entities in ways that have some influence of the folk-philosophy of life in ordinary language as one of the conditions of possibility for its meaningfulness.

## D CONCLUSION

From the samples discussed, the following conclusions may be drawn from the preliminary findings. Both the selected Bible translations and samples from popular OT theologians offer traces of second-order discourse featuring the religious-philosophical sense of "life" and of (my) life in ordinary language. This in turn confirms the hypothesis of this study i.e., that the "turn to life" in the

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*. See above footnote 10 regarding pages numbers.

corresponding conceptual history of everyday speech can be positively correlated to those contexts of OT scholarship included in the analysis. In other words, the emergence of "life" as religious object, as noted by Don Cupitt, also has its counterpart as a popular supervening folk-philosophical concept, concern and category in OT scholarship.

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