Most of the Hebrew Bible scholarship that treats this problem is grounded in Assyriological research and similarly incorporates the frameworks of "hypostasis" (Lewis 2020, 338–92; cf. Allen 2015) and of Rudolph Otto's (1952) concepts of the numinous (Schaper 2019, 180–81), of *mysterium* (Smith, 2001, 94–95), of the tension of the *fascinans* and the *tremendum* (Sommer 2009, 97), and the notion of the deity as "the wholly other." The most influential engagement within Hebrew Bible scholarship has been Benjamin Sommer's *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (2009), which formulates a conceptual model for thinking through this phenomenon that Sommer calls the "Fluidity Model."[8] According to this model, there are two types of "fluidity" characterizing divine selfhood in ancient Southwest Asia. The first is *fragmentation*, or the ability of divine selfhood to fragment and simultaneously occupy multiple different bodies. The second is *overlap*, or the ability of divine selves to overlap, inhabit each other, or converge (Sommer 2009, 13–19).[9] The fluidity metaphor is intended to help us grasp the concept of the divine self being manifested in a variety of "bodies" that occupy different points in space at different or the same points in time. This fluidity makes them utterly unique, according to Sommer, who states, "For the peoples of the ancient Near East, the gods were made of a different sort of stuff, not only physically, but also ontologically." They were "radically unlike human beings in ways that may seem baffling to people in the contemporary Western world" (Sommer 2009, 12).

Sommer has brilliantly extrapolated this framework of divine personhood from a careful interrogation of ancient Southwest Asian literature, but he happens to closely approximate a widespread anthropological framework for personhood that views the self as fundamentally relational, and frequently partible and/or permeable. Sommer briefly and perhaps incidentally engages some of the features of the framework, but rejects its relevance to his fluidity model (Sommer 2009, 195 n. 145):

> Other cases outside Greece might suggest that human bodies can be seen as somewhat similar to what I describe in Mesopotamian divine bodies, but none

[8] Other thorough analyses are Schaper 2019; Lewis 2020, 333–426; Putthoff 2020, 118–55; cf. Wagner 2019. Two papers published in the course of finalizing this book that deploy the cognitive sciences within a discussion of deity in the Hebrew Bible are Singletary 2021 and Stowers 2021.

[9] These two types of fluidity are a bit too dichotomous in Sommer's framework, however, and the term *bodies* reflects too modern a notion of selfhood. The sharp lines Sommers draws seem largely to be responsible for his conclusion (2009, 124) that the Priestly and Deuteronomic strata "completely rejected this conception," and "insisted that God has only one body and one self." As we will see in chapter 5, these authors and editors were engaged more in a nuanced renegotiation than in a rejection.