Imprecatory Psalms and negative ethnicity in South Africa

by

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

> "It was as if the apartheid era had returned in South Africa. To a world largely unaware of the growing tensions between the country's poorest and the migrants who have streamed in from the rest of Africa, the sight of soldiers on township streets, policemen using shotguns for crowd control, and, above all, the sickening spectacle of "necklacing" came as a shock." (Gordin & Whitaker 2011:n.p.)

Racial tension, ethnic discrimination and xenophobic violence blight the hope of the 'New South Africa' (Pillay 2013:76-77). At the inception of the theme of this study and the corollaries for the findings for the therapeutic, nation-building and spiritually beneficial use of victims of ethnic discrimination, there was indeed a wealth of history to examine in the South African context, particularly as regards the 2008 outbursts of ethnic violence. It is shameful for the democratic and peace-enshrining republic of South Africa that there has continued to be a more-or-less unabated string of xenophobic violence and associated loss of lives; although, as Chipken and Ngqulunga note, the identification with a political identity or ideology (for example, a *South African*) does not necessarily translate into behaviour in accordance with that identity (2008:75). As a South African citizen with no aspirations to ancestral citizenship elsewhere, the present writer has found examining this topic – whether in formal research, or casual reading and current affairs – to be disturbing and an indictment on the silence of authorities, and the tacit permissive culture that allows these crimes to go unhindered. Regrettably, the limitations of this study will not provide a complete or satisfactory solution to the question of ethnic violence and discrimination, however, it is hoped that the findings of this study, and the contextualisation thereof, will be of assistance to those who have been victimised, endangered or threatened on the basis of their national, ethnic or tribal identity.

1.1   Actuality

Xenophobia is a non-indigenous, yet non-alien global actuality that is present in developed and developing nations, whereby the "members of one national culture do not understand, appreciate and accommodate members of another national culture among them" (Mokegwu 2005:7). These attitudes and tensions may be reported, fostered or ignited through media, journalists, knowingly or unwittingly (Mokegwu

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2005:7-8), which will be discussed further in sections 4.2 and 4.3. Xenophobic violence is often only associated with the mass outbreaks in 2008 and 2015, but featured within the first decade of post-Apartheid South African history already: over a period of five weeks through June and July 2000, seven foreign nationals were killed in ethnically motivated attacks, shootings and burnings (Independent Online 2000:n.p.) Investigations showed distrust and dislike of foreign nationals by locals who viewed them as competition for resources (housing and work) (Independent Online 2000:n.p.) Whilst financial or other non-xenophobic motivations were apparent in some attacks of foreign nationals, the "general climate of xenophobia" creates an environment in which such attacks are more readily carried out, and less likely to be reported to institutional (governmental) bodies, most notably the police (Harris 2001:n.p.) Scandalously, xenophobic violence is perceived by many refugees to be merely an extension of the violence prevalent in South African (Harris 2001:n.p.)

Part of the concern of this study will be the reality of negative ethnicity, which is narrower than ethnic discrimination, and refers to the biases and attitudes that members of the same racial subpopulation have towards one-another on the basis of varying language, religion and/or culture (Wa Wamwere 2003:70). In his analysis of negative ethnicity in Africa, Wa Wamwere notes that the deaths in Africa attributable to negative ethnicity run into the millions and are on par with the damage of atomic warfare (Wa Wamwere 2003:11-12). In *Negative Ethnicity,* Wa Wamwere (2003) demonstrates that the etymology of negative ethnicity is found in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial practices and biases, and often the same roots can be found as wide-spread as Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Somalia.

Colonisation has a significant role in the present ethnic conflicts in Africa, as the colonial powers maintained control through the manipulation and elevation of ethnicities (Thomson 2012:287). Indeed, under colonial rule, developed zones were the enclave of the colonists and settlers, and civic rights were accorded only to those Africans who proved their merit thereof (Thomson 2012:288). In addition to favouring particular tribes and ethnicities, colonial powers also divided tribal territories by geography, and not ethnicity – inducing rivalries in chieftaincies (Thomson

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2012:299). In *A People Betrayed* (2000:70-72), Melvern argues persuasively that negative ethnicity has been fuelled for the gain of both colonial and tribal powers, particularly in the genocide of Rwanda.

A tension exists in postcolonial, and post-Apartheid Africa between an inclusive nationalism and an exclusive nativism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:61, 73-74). Framers of postcolonial constitutions largely minimise the differences in ethnicities (Thomson 2012:302), but in others, the historical ethnicities are entrenched and used to reallocate territories (Debelo 2012:517). Although one could expect that the postcolonial dictum would result in unity, at least within a larger racial group, the Xenophobic attacks of South Africa have disproven this notion (Sharp 2008:1). As early as 1995, research showed simmering hostility to foreigners, with 72% of black South African respondents favouring "strict action to be taken against illegals" (Hart 1996:31). Following the 2008 attacks, even the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), recommended legalization of existing foreigners, but barring entry to future foreigners, as well as barring them from certain employment categories (Sharp 2008:1). The question begs, however, what has prompted such proposals? Underlying these proposals is the belief that the violence of May 2008 was aimed at foreigners, however, as Sharp (2008:2) notes, one third of casualties were South Africans, and that attacks on South Africans may have resulted from: being falsely identified as foreigners (due to darker complexions or a lack of proficiency in South African languages), or being migrants from further afield within South Africa (and therefore non-endemic).

In the analysis of the South African situation, the negative ethnicity model proves useful, and sociological studies have shown that this negative ethnicity is further engendered by the division of the poor in South Africa into "'our' poor and the 'foreign' poor" (Neocosmos, cited by Sharp 2008:2).

The notable absence of intervention and directives by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) over many of the twentieth-century ethnic incidents is in part due to mandate, which concerned the sovereignty and decolonization of African States, with the notable exception of the condemnation of Apartheid in South Africa (Murray 2004:7-8). Notwithstanding the South African exception, the "OAU's focus was on

protection of the state, not the individual" (Murray 2007:7). The transition from the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) to African Union (AU) was envisaged as a closer integration and "fraternity" between African states, however, prevalent intra-national conflict have diverted much of the available resources (Mogekwu 2005:6). Prolonged violent conflicts are often well-reported and acted-upon, however, less well-reported are underlying discriminatory practices and ethnic tensions (Mokegwu 2005:6-7).

In the midst of these experiences of ethnic violence and negative ethnicity, commonality exists between the victims of negative ethnicity and the psalmists of the Imprecatory Psalms. Imprecatory Psalms are "those psalms in which the writer prays that God may afflict the evildoer and punish him according to his deserts" (Leupold 1969:18). Such psalms of cursing express the desire(s) that:

> The cursed one fails in everything … is smitten by all sorts of disaster and suffers from want of all that makes life worth living; prematurely … meets with evil and sudden death, and his family and his name are obliterated from earth (Mowinckel 2004:48).

Mowinckel (2004:50) further observes that the curse formula typically describes the wrongdoing of the enemy, indicating "a rather strong element of moral and religious and popular education". Imprecations such as those of Psalm 83 are based on the view that the enemy "threatens the very existence of God's people" (Leupold 1969:602). Identification of victims of negative ethnicity with the imprecating psalmist is thus possible; this is made even more plausible when it is considered that in the case of Psalm 83, the enemies are: "*members of Israel's extended family* (vv. 6-7a) … foreign local powers (v. 7b), and an imperial power (v. 8)" (Goldingay 2007:573, emphasis added). In light of New Testament (NT) injunctions to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44, ESV), this poses an ethical dilemma for the Christian.

It would seem that there are two separate agendas in operation, which must be brought into unison: Bullock (2001:53) further warns that there is a somewhat different approach to resolving theological difficulties in the two testaments – praying for one's enemies is not an explicit theme in the Old Testament. Imprecatory psalms, by-and-large are responses to enduring threats and dangers, and enemies who are

violently opposed to the psalmist's people (Bullock 2001:228). As will be discussed later in fuller detail, the ethical *conflict* is resolved in several methods (Bullock 2001:228-232): Erich Zenger suggests that the nature of poetry is one of exaggeration, and hence the psalms may not be meant to be taken as literally as they would seem; the curse word (effective word) is appealed to by Mowinckel; a further solution points to a lesser ('inferior') ethic in the Old Testament, but this results in a greater schism between the two testaments. We should note that Jesus quoted – or at least alluded to – several imprecatory passages which is both a further affirmation of their appropriateness for scripture, and a messianic element in the imprecatory psalms (Bullock 2001:230)

1.2   Problem statement

Several problems are considered in this study, **firstly**, reality of ethnic discrimination and negative ethnicity in Africa, specifically in South Africa. As will be demonstrated, the occurrence of ethnic discrimination on a tribal, national and regional scale has been provoked and engendered by both colonial and post-colonial powers. Naturally, wherever negative ethnicity is practised, there are victims associated. The victimisation is a powerful motivator for reactions, be they political, anarchical or revengeful. Hence, this study seeks to establish the reality of negative ethnicity as a present problem, especially as pertains to the promulgation of such ideologies through politics and the media. Furthermore, the causes of negative ethnicity will be examined in addition to the effects thereof.

Given the reality of negative ethnicity in current South Africa, we will examine the historical reality of negative ethnicity for Ancient Israel, as detailed in the imprecatory psalms. Therefore, the **second** problem to be concerned is that of the ethical problems posed by the Imprecatory Psalms, particularly in light of the NT injunctions to forgiving one's enemies and not seeking revenge. For the purposes of this study, attention will be exegetically focussed on Psalm 83 as an exemplary elective, due to the clarity of negative ethnicity in light of the surrounding nations.

Thirdly, the question of the legitimacy of imprecation as a medium of expression for victims of negative ethnicity will be examined; conversely, to determine a suitable means of expression if imprecatory prayers are found unsuitable. This will require

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interaction with the ethics of imprecatory psalms, and a review of the attempts to unify, or even excuse, the harsh rhetoric of the imprecatory psalms. A further development of this problem is the proposal of a reconciliatory use of the imprecatory psalms between victims and offenders of negative ethnicity, particularly in light of anti-hate speech legislation and tendency to violent outbursts of negative ethnicity in South Africa.

1.3   Aims and objectives

The aims of this study are as follows:

- To typify ethnic discrimination in Africa, with special focus on South Africa with regards to:
  - Causes of negative ethnicity – both endemic to Africa and colonial
  - Characteristics of negative ethnicity, in order to develop a working definition
  - Expressions of, and/or, incitement to negative ethnicity, as seen in violent attacks, looting and politicised violence
  - Experience of the victims, particularly as they may relate with the psalmist of the imprecatory psalms
- To greater clarify the usage of imprecatory psalms in Israel, with the aims:
  - To characterise imprecatory psalms in both form and function
  - To understand the experience of negative ethnicity in the imprecatory psalms through exegesis of Psalm 83
  - To posit a therapeutic and reconciliatory use of imprecation for the victims of negative ethnicity
- To determine the plausibility of imprecation as a means of expression
  - To determine the ethical limits for such expression as pertains to the constitution of South Africa and the longstanding polarisation of South African societies
  - To identify alternate modes of expression for victims of negative ethnicity where imprecation proves to be unsuitable
- To come to a conclusion with findings and recommendations

1.4 Research methodology

This is a literature and exegetical study, using the exegetical method proposed by Gorman in *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (2001).

Exegesis has been defined as:

> The careful historical, literary and theological analysis of a text … [and] deliberate, word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase consideration of all the parts of a text in order to understand it as a whole … Exegesis is therefore an investigation … of the many dimensions, or textures, of a particular text (Gorman 2001:8-9)

Although the method of exegesis is one of stepwise analysis of a text, Malherbe (1961:173) cautions that the exegete must keep in mind that scripture is "a syncretistic blend of different elements … which … has brought about a new entity". Hence, Malherbe (1961:173) advises holding the individual part of a text in tension with the relationship of that part with the text in which it is found.

In exegesis, we attempt to overcome the barrier posed by our position as a third party to the text – we are not the authors nor original recipients, and so we are required to gain insight and understanding into a foreign sender and recipient (Hayes & Holladay 2007:5). Another barrier is that of the different languages – the subtleties of structure, grammar and vocabulary are endemic to the original message, and cannot always be expressed in translations, prompting Hayes & Holladay to remark that "translations are always interpretations to some extent" (2007:6). Further barriers outlined by Hayes & Holladay (2012:6-11) are: the differences in the cultures of the author(s), recipients and exegetes; the historical gap, meaning the "persons, places, practices, and perspectives" of the original authorial world; the collection and redaction of texts over time; duplicate (and variant) manuscripts; a sacred identity ascribed to the text which renders them authoritative, elevated and sources of truth in the religious community that ascribes them to be sacred.

As Groenewald (2007:1017) notes, the methodology of exegesis is by no means universally accepted, and is still a subject of debate. Nonetheless, the synchronistic approach of socio-rhetorical criticism (Gorman 2001:12) is preferred for this study, bearing in mind that synchronic and diachronic approaches are not mutually exclusive, but are, in fact, linked (Groenewald 2007:1028). With regards to the

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psalms, an influential methodology from the twentieth century onwards, which forms the basis for many of the approaches developed since, is the form-critical approach (Emanuel 2012:5). In summation, Emanuel (2012:6-7) notes the progression of psalter exegesis from Hermann Gunkel (form-critical pioneer), through Sigmund Mowinckel (who introduced a study of cultic elements), Artur Weiser (hypothesised a covenant renewal festival) and Kraus who included modern archaeology in his exegesis. The mid-twentieth century saw the introduction of rhetorical criticism (the study of the contribution of individual verses and stanzas to an overall meaning within a pericope), as well as the development of total interpretation and the study of poetic nature of the psalms (Emanuel 2012:6-7). Wenham (2012:40) explains that canonical criticism (the reading of the psalm as its own contribution to the meaning of scripture) is likewise based on the form-critical studies of Gunkel and Mowinckel. Grammatical criticism will also be employed, which is concerned with the lexical, grammatical and syntactical analysis (Hayes & Holladay 2007:26; Gorman 2001:13).

Logically, the exegete must first define *what* the text to be studied is, before determining what the text *means*; this process is the defining of the pericope and attention must be given to introductory and key statements, syntax, repetition, vocabulary and stylistic developments, alterations in literary form and the final form of the text (Lamey 2006:n.p.). With the Psalms, this step is relatively straightforward, as the psalms have included chapters, headings and titles since antiquity (Gorman 2001:60). Whilst this step is sometimes only introduced later in the exegetical process, the present author believes that it is truly the first step of exegesis, as all further study and criticism requires delineation of the text to be studied.

Departing from Gorman, as already indicated, the first step in the exegetical method of this study is the definition of the pericope, and will comprise a relatively short section. Forthwith, the various critical methodologies will be applied: contextual, textual, historical-form, grammatical, tradition and redaction. The need for these various approaches and critical methods is explained by King & Stager (2001:3):

> "In many ways the Bible resembles a highly stratified tell that gradually accumulated, layer upon layer, tradition upon tradition, through the ages. In some cases materials from earlier strata were reused and reshaped into new and different figurations and contexts."

The next step will be contextual analysis: utilising historical criticism to determine the historical context of the text (Groenewald 2007:1018; Hayes & Holladay 2007:26) by determining the "persons, events, social conditions, or … ideas" included in the text as well as the "how, why, when, where" of the production and preservation of the text (Hayes & Holladay 2007:53). Israel did not come about in a vacuum, but developed statehood in the dawn of the Iron Age, according to three theories, which are not mutually exclusive (Liverani 2005:32):

- A sudden, concentrated conquest of Canaan;
- Progressive occupation from either existing pastoral and/or desert peoples;
- A farmer's revolt which forced the issue.

Hence, we must consider how the historical setting of the Israelites impacted on their impetus to record and redact texts; by doing so, we are able to make use of the findings of "obsolete 'biblical archaeology'" in an objective and constructive manner (Liverani 2005:58).

Contextual analysis includes literary and rhetorical analysis, which aims to place the passage within its literary surroundings and seeks to understand how the placement may have impacted on the reading of the passage (Gorman 2001:69).

Textual criticism will then be applied to establish variances and the validity of the text. Hayes & Holladay outline four types of textual variants: those arising in the original languages; variants between early translations of manuscripts; variants occurring between the original languages and early translations; variants found in non-biblical writings (2007:38). Textual criticism will be done to the extent warranted by the variants uncovered in this step.

At this point, the study will turn to the text itself, and the first step of the analysis of the content is macrostructural analysis, namely literary and form analysis. Literary analysis is necessary, as the expectations and conventions when approaching a text vary according to the literary type (Hayes & Holladay 2007:91). Rhetorical analysis is concerned with the *why* a text is presented in a particular form and is cognisant that

the author engaged in three distinct steps (Hayes & Holladay 2007:92-93): invention (selection of arguments and supporting evidence), arrangement (deliberate ordering of material for efficacy) and stylisation (selection of language appropriate to the speaker and theme). Further steps in literary criticism include consideration of the literary context and structure (*inter alia*, the use of themes, chronologies, motifs, rituals/worship to structure a text), where relation to earlier works may also be found (Hayes & Holladay 2007:94-95). Attention will also be given to literary devices and literary mood; Hayes and Holladay (2007:100) explain the importance of literary mood in literary criticism:

> "If the mood of a text – or the mood a text creates – is liturgical, we should read the language as poetic. It is probably intended to elicit certain emotions rather than convey theological propositions … [and determines] how we understand a highly evocative passage from a liturgical setting."

Form criticism will address questions of genre and how it interacts with the *Sitz im Leben*, and is a mode of examining the relationship of form, content and meaning (Hayes & Holladay 2007:104-105). The study of form *(Formgeschichte/ Gattungsgeschichte)* has been instrumental in the development of twentieth-century biblical exegesis (Sweeney & Ben Zvi 2003:1). In brief, form criticism involves the following:

> "… an analysis of the individual form or structure of a text, the identification of its genres or typical features of expression, the societal function or setting of both the form and the genre of the text, and the application of these aspects to the overall reading and interpretation of the text in question" (Sweeney & Ben Zvi 2003:1)

The two-fold process of form criticism first identifies the genre of the text in question, and then the relationship of this text to the form; these insights gleaned from the form as a whole inform the understanding of individual textual units, and vice-versa (Campbell 2003:23).

Following classification of the text within a literary *genre*, the study will then turn to the sociological role of that genre within the ancient faith community (Hayes & Holladay 2007:106).

Microstructural (detailed) analysis will be undertaken via Grammatical criticism, wherein the meaning of individual words and their arrangements (Hayes & Holladay

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2007:72), noting that both denotative and connotative meanings must be considered, as, "the meaning of a word … is dependent upon a combination of the dictionary meaning and the context" (Gorman 2001:98-99).

Hereafter, tradition analysis is fitting, as it is a historical reality that the Hebrew texts were written, redacted and passed on through varying authors, at varying times and locations (Groenewald 2007:1017). Tradition criticism encapsulates the quest to understand the religious and cultural traditions of the original author and recipient, particularly how these contributed to the final text that was recorded (Hayes & Holladay 2007:115). An example of a literary tradition, such as the exodus motif, which focuses on the powerful work of God in the creation of an Israelite identity, and the journey to Canaan forms a central and undisputedly important theme throughout scripture (Emanuel 2012:1), and whilst this will be seen as an oblique element in the psalm that will be studied, the point of the exegetical tradition criticism will be to gain an understanding of how the text functioned in Ancient Israelite religion.

Redaction criticism aims to uncover how the text has been received and the impact of transmission on the text itself, hence it "explores how an author's theology is reflected in changes that the author makes to previous material" (Hayes & Holladay 2007:127). As opposed to form criticism, redaction criticism has become the accepted norm in exegesis of the Book, and recognises that the psalms are "literary entities and canonical wholes … a coherent whole" (Groenewald 2007:1020). Underlying redaction criticism of the Psalms is the belief that there is meaning in their arrangement which the exegetical process seeks to uncover (Groenewald 2007:1021). Penultimately, synthesis of the exegetical findings will be formulated, which is "to pull various elements together into some kind of unified body" (Gorman 2001:115).

Finally, hermeneutical reflection will be carried out, seeking to be true to both the immediate context of the text and the implications thereof for the contemporary reader. As Malherbe (1961:170) explains, hermeneutics seeks to synthesise the exegetical findings so as to provide relevance, acknowledging presuppositions and to evaluate the validity of the conclusion. In *Theological Reflection,* Thompson, Pattison and Thompson (2008:157) elucidate that whilst academic theology is

primarily philosophical and aims to produce valid philosophical learning, church theology is primarily systematic and seeks meaning for the truths learned; in contrast theology for the societal context is practical and seeks to identify with both the struggle and oppression of various groups with a view to bring about "ethical action, leading to liberation". Hence, hermeneutical reflection serves the dual purpose of exegesis: interpretation and application (Vines & Allen 1987:316).

1.5   Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study can be formulated as follows:

> *Imprecatory prayer forms a legitimate religious experience and can be appropriated as a form of expression for the victims of ethnically motivated violence (ethnic discrimination) for spiritual and psychological healing, however cannot be used to incite reciprocal violence.*

1.6   Chapter division

Chapter 1 forms the research proposal of this study and seeks to establish the base point from which the study proceeds. In this chapter, the present and continuing actuality of ethnic discrimination in Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, will be established as a motivation for this study. In brief, a three-fold problem statement is presented: (1) the extent of ethnic discrimination in South Africa, (2) the experience of Ancient Israel of ethnic discrimination, and the corollaries for present-day victims of negative ethnicity, and (3) the question of whether imprecation is a suitable means of expression and reconciliation for victims of ethnic discrimination. The aims and objectives of this study have been outlined, enabling clear and directed research. As this study will make use of both an exegetical method, and a literature study, significant explanation is provided on the exegetical method to be employed. Following a brief statement of the hypothesis, a chapter division, and orthographical remarks are included in this chapter.

Having established the actuality of ethnic discrimination in South Africa in chapter 1, Chapter 2 is devoted to in-depth consideration of the phenomenon. Following a brief review of the actuality of negative ethnicity, a literature review is presented of relevant works and material. Thereafter, attention will turn to the subject of negative

ethnicity and seek to provide a working definition, as well as to provide insight into the role of the colonial systems in its promulgation, and to provide distinction between tribalism and national negative ethnicity. Subsequent to the theoretical discussion of negative ethnicity, the real-world expressions thereof will be examined, with attention given to the Eurocentric (colonial and anti-immigration) examples however, greater focus is on negative ethnicity in Africa. Hence, genocides in Africa, the role of the Apartheid government in fostering ethnic discrimination and the post-1994 outbursts of xenophobia will be examined. Finally, a conclusion will be given summarising the findings of this chapter.

Given the hypothesis of this study, namely that "imprecatory prayer … can be appropriated as a form of expression for the victims of negative ethnicity for spiritual and psychological healing", it is essential that imprecatory prayer, as found in the imprecatory psalms is examined. Chapter 3 will start with a preliminary introduction to the genre of imprecatory psalms, before embarking on an exegesis of Psalm 83 as a key text for the study. Following the exegetical method outlined in chapter one, socio-rhetorical criticism will be employed to provide a hermeneutical reflection of Psalm 83, wherein the link of the psalmist with ethnic discrimination will be made clear. Furthermore, the varied nature of the nations mentioned in Psalm 83 will be examined for application for the victims of negative ethnicity. A conclusion of the exegetical outcomes will then be provided, synthesising the findings into a workable unit. In the treatment of Psalm 83, the view expressed by Schroeder (2001:xi) is appropriated, albeit silently, that the biblical understanding of reality with all its complexities presupposes the involvement of God as an agent within the course of history.

It is in chapter 4 that the posited usage of the imprecatory psalms will be interrogated. This will require consideration of the ethical problem that the imprecatory psalms provide, including a survey of attempts to reconcile the imprecatory psalms with Judeo-Christian ethics. It is also in this chapter that the role of jussives in the Hebrew text will be examined for their contribution to the imprecatory psalms. Building on the suggested appropriation of the imprecatory psalms for victims of negative ethnicity, attention will turn to the constitutional and legal limitations and/or precedents that have bearing on this process. This study will

also attempt to provide a framework that may allow for the usage of the imprecatory psalms for reconciliation in South Africa. It is worth noting at this point, that the psalmist's progression from lament to joy is not dependant on personal retribution, but the agency of God in vindicating the victimised (Schroeder 2001:83). Cautions in this process will be noted, particularly as relates to the potential for violence, hate speech and ineffectual dialogue. These elements will be synthesised in a conclusion, so as to provide simplified access to the key findings.

As the reader has borne with the author for a lengthy examination of many facets of this topic, it is necessary that an introduction is provided in chapter 5, which surveys the route taken thus far, with a summation of the findings of the preceding chapters. Thereafter, the effectiveness of the methodology will be assessed, and a summary of the most notable findings will be presented. The limitations of the study will be acknowledged, and recommendations based on the findings will be put forward. Finally, the hypothesis of the study will be critically evaluated in light of the research conducted, and a determination of its validity presented.

1.7   Orthographical remarks

English translations of the Bible used will be the English Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

The Hebrew text I have used is the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, unless otherwise indicated.

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo [1]
ESV	English Standard Version
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
LXX	Septuagint

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[1] Notwithstanding the change of the name of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Zaire in the years 1971-1997, this paper will, for ease of reference use only the abbreviation DRC for this state

MT	Masoretic Text
OAH	Organization of American Historians
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAMUS	South African Music Studies
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAPL	South African Public Law
TDR	The Drama Review
TWQ	Third World Quarterly
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

As has been established in the first chapter, ethnic discrimination and violence are problems which have blighted South African society. This chapter serves to examine the historical precedents of ethnic violence, with particular focus on the tribalism question, and colonial influences in Africa at large and typified in Apartheid South Africa.

According to the instrumentalist view of ethnic conflict, ethnicity is simply a label used to further the agenda of a particular individual ("elites"), whereas in the psychocultural (social psychological) view, taken in this study, ethnic conflict is a reality grounded in ethnic identities (Kaufman 2011:91). Social anthropologists consider ethnicity to be the result of a group self-identifying itself as distinct from other groups, who, in turn, recognise the former's distinctiveness from themselves (Eriksen 1997:34), often along a dichotomy of "'us', correct and decent people. From the deviant 'them'" (Liverani 2005:535). Due to political, ideological and practical difficulties, many theorists avoid speaking of race when discussing ethnicity (Crouch 2014:84; Eriksen 1997:34-35; Gilligan 2011:79; Marger 1994:24). Anthropology has largely moved away from a strict primordial view, as genetic and cultural commonality are not static and may change within a group (Crouch 2014:85). Prominent theorist, Anthony Smith, listed the requirements for delineating an ethnic community: shared identity (name), common ancestry/descent, cultural homogeneity (such as language, religion and mythology) and territorial claims (Brown 1997:81; Kaufman 2011:92). In the Old Testament, it is commonplace to find instruction that Israel remain a distinct group from the nations surrounding them and the foreigners in their midst (Human 2012:75-76). Nonetheless the same text contains instructions to treat aliens and foreigners well, and holds out the possibility for inclusion into social and communal life of Israel (Human 2012:78). Furthermore, an aspect of Old Testament ethics in the wisdom literature is the *retributive principle* – meaning that the good deeds (or evil deeds) one commits will be returned (Human 2012:81).

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Ethnic groups are also considered a social construct as commonalities and differences between groups are subject to perception, albeit due to genetic similarities (Marger 1994:13; Shoup 2008:4-5) and cultural homogeneity (Crouch 2014:87). Hence, ethnicity is both an objective and subjective quality, although the ascription of ethnicity by birth is not readily changed (Kaufman 2011:91-92; Marger 1994:14-15). This is represented by the constructivist view of ethnicity, according to which, ethnic identity is both shaped and changed by social interactions and a desire to belong with a group (Shoup 2008:4-5). In establishing a group identity, there is the "creation and strengthening and utilization of different kinds of myths, beliefs, norms, values, and motives" (Cohen, cited by Crouch 2014:104). These processes entail mythology of origins (and the superiority of one's own ethnic group), maintaining the genetic uniqueness of the group by resisting intermarriages, avoidance of social activity with other groups, refining a group culture (which may entail religion), territorial agreements and the removal of variant sub-cultures (Crouch 2014:104).

2.2 Ethnic discrimination

The formation of ethnic groupings or social circles (*soziale Verkehrsgemeinschaft*) develops along axes of ease-or-difficulty of relating, and trust-or-mistrust (Weber 1997:17). These axes are determined by many factors such as grooming, clothing and dietary habits, in addition to race and geography which may not even be extreme differences: "Any cultural trait, no matter how superficial, can serve as a starting point for … monopolistic closure" (Weber 1997:17). Such groupings formed around common descent, physical similarities or shared customs are built on a transient sense of belonging with one's own group, and thereby establishing ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*), which can be readily manipulated by political entities (Weber 1997:18-19). Ethnic identity formation occurs along both a positive enculturation (social structures and community involvement) and negative filtering (of mistreatment and/or derogatory messages) (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito 1999:39). The complexity of ethnogenesis poses a challenge, as the mere existence of a group may not constitute an ethnicity, but is dependent on aspects such as awareness of ethnicity, material culture differentiation, the historical-social reasons for identifying as an ethnicity and how that group restricted itself geographically (Liverani 2005:58). Where an ethnic group develops statehood, kinship and shared genealogy form the

basis of "internal cohesion" as opposed to territory and administration (Liverani 2005:76).

Within these ethnic groups, shared language and customs creates a belief that honour is due to their own group only, and other groups are therefore denied this "ethnic honour" (Weber 1997:19 - 20). Ethnocentrism – the view that one's own ethnic group is superior to others – is a development of the inclusivism of ethnicity whereby other ethnicities are judged by one's own ethnic standards (Marger 1994:15).

2.2.1   Negative ethnicity as a lens to explain ethnic discrimination

Negative ethnicity is clearly observed in the violence in Kenya after the 2007 elections, where the chairman of the electoral commission went to so far as to caution against "negative ethnicity" before releasing the results (Kimani 2010:251). This incident is particularly relevant due to the well-defined ethnic rivalry: it was widely alleged that the Kikuyu presidency of the incumbent was partial to its own ethnic group and the resulting violence claimed over 1000 lives over the course of approximately 100 days, and displaced 350000 people (Kimani 2010:251).

Conflict is largely considered the natural outcome of inter-ethnic contact, especially when conflict is understood as an attempt to undermine another ethnic group, and not only to bring about its end (Marger 1994:113-114). In addition, it is generally assumed that ethnic conflict will be violent, although an unproven hypothesis (Eck 2009:369; Uyangoda 2006:2962). The response to such attempts by a dominant ethnic group will be one of reaction, accommodation or submission by the minority group (Marger 1994:114). Ethnic conflict may be sporadic, and differs in its form and motivation both between and within societies (Marger 1994:114). Shifts in society that bring differing ethnic groups into contact result in either assimilation (increasingly culturally homogenous) or pluralism (cultural and social separation), promoting order or conflict, respectively (Marger 1994:115). Ethnic pluralism results from three primary modes: conquest of one ethnic group by another, annexation (particularly through colonialism, which annexed and divided territories without consideration of the inhabitants) and coerced migration (such as slavery) (Esman 2004:51-55).

Ethnic conflict is not exclusively about ethnicity, but requires that at least one of the organising groups is composed of a single, distinct ethnicity (Cordell & Wolff 2011:4). Such ethnic mobilization is argued to lead to greater violence in ethnic conflicts, due to the strength of ethnic identity, and a ready-made pool of combatants, who can be recruited with relatively little effort (Eck 2009:370, 373). Twagilimana estimates that over 14 million people have been killed in ethnic conflict between 1945 and 2003 (2003:3-4).

2.2.2   Ethnic discrimination as colonial legacy in Africa

Colonisation changed African ethnicity from a generic and malleable identity to a fixed category, yet prescribed territorial and national boundaries arbitrarily, resulting in societies of various ethnicities foisted together, often in competition (Eriksen 1997:41; Muck 2011:29). Compounding this ethnic competition, it was not uncommon for a single ethnic group to be favoured, bringing many difficulties to the democratization process (Brown 1997:86; Muck 2011:31). In Africa, the attitudes inherent in European thought were evidenced in speeches and research which characterised the African populace as infantile and incapable of self-governance, and in need of de-Africanisation (Mamdani 1996:4-5). Direct governance was the application of European rules and institutions in African colonies, whereby only these would be permitted, and any existing African institutions and legal codes were stifled (Mamdani 1996:16). Under direct governance, segregation was ostensibly about culture and civilization, as evidenced by the attempt to "civilise" the African (Mamdani 1996:16).

The centralised model of colonial governance, favoured by the French, involved removing all local authority structures and enforcing the European model and culture on the colony, limiting education and cultural assimilation to only the elites or chosen ethnic group (Muck 2011:32). The decentralised system of colonial governance, favoured by the British, deliberately promoted ethnic differences and competition to secure the colonial power's grip (Muck 2011:32). These different styles of governance have an impact on both the frequency and scale of ethnic violence in Africa, with the centralised model producing less frequent, but more violent ethnic

conflict (Muck 2011:32). Decolonisation of African society and thinking must be cognisant of the reality that colonisation and imperial ambition have been key to the creation of the Africa that now exists (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010:282).

In addition to manipulation of ethnic identities and incipient tensions, the colonial powers also brought indentured labour from other colonies to new acquisitions, providing further basis for ethnic conflict (Kumar 2000:2386). The colonial systems have had longstanding impacts on the indentured labourers, as can be seen in income disparity between Indians brought to the Fiji islands by the British, which continues to the present day (Kumar 2000:2387).

Kimani (2010:252) is unequivocal in tracing the tribal and ethnic divisions in Kenya which resulted in the violence of 2007/2008 to the colonial manipulation of ethnic identities to distract attention from the "economic marginalization and inequalities" inherent in colonialism. Indeed, Muck considers the involvement of colonial powers in conceptualising ethnicity to be a significant factor in almost all ethnic conflicts on the African continent (2011:31). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2010:281) likewise argues that colonialism, imperialism, Apartheid and other ideological movements across the African continent have recently resulted in narrow nationalism which is tinder for discrimination and xenophobia.

Uyangoda (2006:2962) points out that the secessionist movements in postcolonial nations are in fact a reflection of the failure of the colonising powers to reform society into political equitability (2006:2962). Postcolonial inequality of resources, power and wealth results in *ethnic counter-balance* which leaves a society vulnerable to political extremists who exploit ethnic tensions (Shoup 2008:2). Disparity between economically and politically dominant ethnic groups characterises ethnic counter-balance, and has been detailed in African countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, as well as Indonesia, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Myanmar, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan (Shoup 2008:16-17). Fear of (re)domination by the economically powerful group further encourages the politically dominant group to rely on their indigeneity, which accords them rights that the non-indigene is deprived of (Shoup 2008:18). These inequalities, fears and social strata have been used to further ideologies of both colonial and liberation movements, as "a tool open to

mobilisation or rallying the different groups around their socio-economic and political grievances" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010:282).

Postcolonial societies are typically imbalanced, with the following characteristics (Smith 2009:89): an indigenous middle class and industrialised working class are both absent; land is held in feudal estates; the dominant social class is bureaucratic; the rural indigenes are deprived of land and relegated to peasant labour. Matsinhe (2011:295) notes that the indigene-versus-non-indigene division continued into post-Apartheid South Africa through the propagation of the *makwerekwere*[2] concept which made the non-South African black African the scapegoat and "bogeyman", the usage of *makwerekwere* is derogatory and relates strictly to African foreign nationals (Nyamnjoh 2014:397), white people in South Africa, irrespective of provenance are not considered *makwerekwere* (Abdi 2011:693). Desai (2010:99) reports how the drive to clear out foreigners *(makwerekwere)* was a point of pride in some settlements, such as Ramaphosa, once the official response to xenophobic violence receded.

2.2.3   Tribalism in Africa

The concept of tribes is derived from the Latin *tribus*, which related to both territorial and social divisions in the Roman empire (Kimani 2010:252), but was applied in Africa on the basis of language (Volkan 1997:12). In order to maintain control, the colonists manipulated the spatial and social distinctions between ethnic groups, under the guise of "'tribal' boundaries" (Kimani 2010:252). The term *tribe* was applied to Africans from early colonisation and related anthropological studies, without any formal definition to provide guidance (Ekeh 1990:662). Liverani (2005:41-42) explains that there are three phases of the development of a tribe: nomadic, sedentary and consolidation. The nomadic phase relates to the highly mobile pastoral groupings, which eventually settle in close – or far – proximity, which develop a sense of communal identity, and finally, through intermarriage, military co-operation and hospitability these groups may consolidate and form a self-governing tribe (Liverani 2005:41-42).

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[2] Interestingly, many of the derogatory sentiments associated with *makwerekwere* are found in media and discourse in Botswana (Nyamnjoh 2002:768)

As African anthropology has progressed from colonial to postcolonial, the terms *tribe* and *tribalism* have become outmoded – specifically as relates to Africa – with *ethnic group* and *ethnicity* the preferred terms in academic circles, whilst *tribe/tribalism* remain in the popular consciousness (Ekeh 1990:660-661, 664). In agreement, Vail (1989:1) observes that *tribe* is used derisively, and *ethnicity* in less derisive discourse; furthermore, *tribalism* is seen as anathema to modernization of the African continent, and an archaic remnant of a society yet to progress, in the evolutionary view of societies popular in the mid-twentieth century (Vail 1989:2). It is posited that *tribalism* has persisted as a reaction to the disruptions wrought by the colonial powers and post-colonial capitalism, whereby safety in an ethnic identity, *Gemeinschaft* can be attained (Vail 1989:5).

Green (2007:728) records the optimism of emerging postcolonial Africa, as expressed by the hopes of Sékou Touré (President of Guinea in 1959) that within several years, ethnic, tribal and religious divisions would be a thing of the past. Liberationists largely recognised the danger that tribalism posed to unity – Green paraphrases Samora Machel's belief that one must 'kill the tribe in order for the nation to live' (2007:728). This led to a dearth of academic study on the origins of ethnic identities in Africa, as the study of ethnicity was regarded as *passé* and contrary to nation-building agendas (Vail 1989:7). Ideology did not translate into practice, however, as the new political powers entrenched the tribal divisions in their appeals to ethnic sensibilities, and largely failed to build a common "pan-ethnic national identity" (Green 2007:728-729). Across Africa, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Botswana, various tribes have claimed priority based on historical territorial possession (*indigeneity*), prompting ethnic tension (Green 2007:729).

Nations are often defined by shared language, however, this overlooks the differences between people(s) (*Volk*), as many nations are comprised of several linguistic groups sharing an official language (Weber 1997:24). When an ethnic group becomes politicised and seeks to enforce their own ethnic ideology, it then becomes a nationalist movement (Eriksen 1997:35). Given that ethno-nationalism is divisive and largely non-transformative of societies, Uyangoda (2006:2962) notes that it poses challenges for transformation across ethnicities.

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Ethnic nationalism promotes the interests and safety of a single group (or antipathy of another), denying other ethnicities their "equal and universal citizenship rights" (Brown 1997:85). It has been postulated that nativism and xenophobia may be interpreted as "insipient signs of a budding national identity", which then has political ramifications (Green 2007:731). However, nation-building requires action in order to reduce the roles of nativism and indigeneity from politics (Green 2007:731).

A rise in ethnic nationalism in one group will necessitate a reaction in other groups who may perceive – or experience – the former as a threat (Brown 1997:85). Where ethnic conflicts arise, they are often domestic, but, spread into neighbouring nations where the inherent ethnic biases may prompt either action or inaction by governments (Brown 1997:82).

2.3   Outbursts of ethnic discrimination

Ethnic cleansing is a process of establishing "ethno-territorial homogenisation" through the removal of a group deemed undesirable for ethnic, political or ideological reasons, often accompanied by settlement of desired ethnicities in their place (Jenne 2011:112). The removal of undesired groups can be through moderate "population transfers", which aim to resettle an ethnic group, or through the extreme method of genocide, which aims to destroy an ethnic group (Jenne 2011:113). Although all three are related, ethnic cleansing, population transfers and genocides differ in the legal implications – once a process of ethnic cleansing is defined as a genocide, then an onus is placed on the international community to intervene (Jenne 2011:113).

Owing to the lack of a formal definition of genocide, and the burden on international powers to intervene, the international community has avoided labelling ethnic cleansing as genocide (Hughes 2011:122). A genocide is any attempt to destroy an ethnic group and/or its ethnic identity – hence, killing is not the only means of committing genocide (Shaw 2003:37). The three stages of genocide involve establishing a social group as a military threat (real or presumed), destruction of the perceived power (military, economic or other) of this enemy and finally the use of

violence to bring about the destruction/harm of a "significant number of its members" (Shaw 2003:37).

In addition to the immense suffering inflicted on victims of ethnicity discrimination, Cordell & Wolff (2011:1) detail the following consequences and risks: societal, territorial and economic disruption, cross-border conflict, fostering organised crime and/or terrorist organisations. The instability of a South Africa emerging from Apartheid has had many outcomes as will be discussed later in this section, however, the insecurity of identity and belonging in the New South Africa have surely had a part in the xenophobic violence, and it is my assertion that the competition (both real, imagined and imposed) by the Apartheid structures and subsequent economic dispensation are linked to the violence which would later emerge.

2.3.1   Sample of international incidences of ethnic discrimination

Arguably the best known case of violent ethnic discrimination in European history – the Holocaust – is preceded by the Armenian genocide of 1915, as well as the Soviet genocide of the Kulaks (1929-1932) (Shaw 2003:42). Throughout the rise of the Nazi regime and World War Two, euthanasia programmes, political genocides and ethnic conflicts marked the Soviet Republic, Japan in mainland China as well as the Nazi occupied territories (Shaw 2003:42).

The Holocaust has become an interpretive scheme for the many other ethnic conflicts and genocides of the twentieth century (MacDonald 2008:1; Twagilimana 2003:xv). Whilst the Holocaust was not exclusively limited to Jews (*broad Holocaust*), the specific focus on the Jewish ethnicity (*narrow Holocaust*) renders it an ethnic conflict (MacDonald 2008:10). During the Nazi Holocaust of Jews (1933-1945), the death toll was approximately 6000000 (MacDonald 2008:9). The term genocide was coined by Raphael Lemkin, and the earliest UN documentation (The Genocide Convention) was subject to much debate, successful endeavours decrease its terms of reference (Shaw 2003:35). As it was passed, the Convention defines genocide as: "any … acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" (Shaw 2003:34). Nonetheless, the exclusion of non-ethnic traits, such as political affiliation and socio-economic class,

allowed such massacres as the Kulaks and political opponents by the Soviets to be lost in technicalities (Shaw 2003:36).

Following the Holocaust and related World War Two genocides, Shaw (2003:43) defines five genocides (or genocidal events) throughout Eurasia: the Chinese *Great Leap Forward* (1959-1961), the Indonesian removal of communists (1965), the Indonesian invasion of East Timor (1975-1999), the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia (1977-1979) and the Yugoslav wars (1991-1999).

Terrorist, criminal and/or separatist groups have manipulated ethnic grievances for their own gain in countries such as Yemen, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Nigeria, Burma, India, Chechnya and former Soviet states (Cordell & Wolff 2011:2-3). Brown (1997:85) notes that ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet states have a strong element of ethnic nationalism, which thrives in weakened political environments and often results in separatist movements.

2.3.2   Genocides in Africa, with particular attention to the Rwandan genocide

A resurgence of interest in the Rwandan genocide was sparked when a UN report on the violence of 1993-2003 was leaked in 2010 (Châtelot 2010; Iliopoulos c.2010). Between April and July 1994, between 800000 and 1000000 people were killed for their ethnicity – for being Tutsi or affiliated to the Tutsis (Kassner 2013:1; Twagilimana 2003:xv). This was a genocide carried out by militarised civilians with government sanction and a UN impasse (Kassner 2013:2-3). Whilst by no means belittling the Holocaust, Shaw (2003:211) boldly asserts that the Rwandan genocide was "the most terrible genocide of the late twentieth century".

Precolonial Rwandan mythology detailed two prominent myths of origin (descent) from a central ancestor, Kigwa, which defined the roles and stereotypes of the three main ethnicities, namely the Tutsi, Hutu and Twa peoples (Twagilimana 2003:36). Both mythologies defined the Tutsi as responsible and superior, the Hutu as servants of the Tutsi, and the Twa as useless and irresponsible (Twagilimana 2003:36-37). Further mythology ascribed intelligence first to the king, then the Tutsi,

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then the Hutu, and none to the Twa (Twagilimana 2003:38). The king, who would always be Tutsi was also considered the incarnation of God, and so to rebel would bring divine punishment on the Hutu and Twa people (Twagilimana 2003:38-39). These mythologies became entrenched in the sayings and proverbs of Rwandan society, whether they extolled the virtues of one ethnicity (Tutsi) or decried another (Hutu/Twa) (Twagilimana 2003:39-40).

European anthropology of the nineteenth and (early) twentieth centuries stereotyped Europeans as superior and (divinely) mandated to bring civilization to peoples that were framed in the most derogatory sentiments possible (Twagilimana 2003:42-45). Rwandan society and culture defied these stereotypes, and so the European ethnologists devised the Hamitic Hypothesis, according to which, the Tutsi were "'mutants' of Europeans … 'European Cousins'", the descendants of the biblical character Ham (Twagilimana 2003:xxiv, 43, 47). As the Tutsi were perceived to be superior, the colonists actively engaged in a "'civilizing' mission" with the Tutsi, relegating the Hutu to vassal status (Twagilimana 2003:xxiv). The bureaucracy of the Rwandan colony was therefore filled with Tutsi, who it was argued, were "meant to reign" (Twagilimana 2003:49; Volkan 1997:14).

Preceding independence, an internal revolt brought an end to the Tutsi monarchy, and in 1962, the Ruanda-Urundi territory was divided into the independent states of Rwanda and Burundi, with Hutus being the majority in both states (Volkan 1997:13-14). Rwandan history from this point until the 1994 genocide was marked by coups, reprisals and periodic ethnic cleansing (Volkan 1997:14). Burundi, sharing the colonial inheritance was also marked by Hutu-Tutsi conflict, coups and mass emigration (Volkan 1997:15). Localised Hutu-Tutsi ethnic conflict spread throughout the region, and came to include the DRC (Volkan 1997:15).

In the DRC, the genocide reached phenomenal levels of violence, as Stearns (2011:256) recounts of the slaughter of a Kasika chief and his household:

> At least fourteen people were in the chief's house when the soldiers arrived. The rebels killed all of them. Villagers who had run into the bushes came back the next morning and found the chief's pregnant wife eviscerated her dead fetus on the ground next to her. The infant

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of the chief's younger brother had been beaten to death against the brick walls of the house. [3]

The scale of the genocide in the DRC is incomprehensible, with the estimated death-toll exceeding 5000000 and rapes exceeding 200000 (Stearns 2011:263,327).

2.3.3 Ethnic discrimination and competition as policy in Apartheid South Africa

As the Afrikaner ethnicity developed, a belief in white supremacy in both society and politics arose, and as Boer territories were annexed by Britain, the ethnic exclusivism (racism) which dominated Afrikaner society persisted (Shoup 2008:141). Long before Apartheid South Africa took form, ethnic identities were used – and misused – to protect the interests of European settlers, as Harries (1989:102) details of the mines: mining crews were organised according to ethnic identities, as were hostels, inter-tribal dance contests and proto-unions. Such intentional stoking of ethnic identities and rivalries was even highlighted as a strategy of self-preservation by government in the early twentieth century (Harries 1989:102).

Tribalism was used as an apologetic of the Apartheid era thinking of ethnicity (Vail 1989:1), with the Afrikaner National Party portraying itself as the vanguard of tribal lifestyles and ethnic identities and heritage (Harries 1989:103). Legislation was employed to both create and enforce the Apartheid system of homelands: the Bantu Authorities Act (1951) gave regional powers to chieftains, and the Natives Trust and Land Act (1936) in an amendment officially classified Africans living on white owned land as squatters who were to be repatriated to homelands (Harries 1989:103-104). Further legislation relating to influx control was used to ensure that black Africans could not permanently reside outside the homelands (Harries 1989:104). In urban settings, entire swaths of residences were rezoned and resettled along ethnic lines in a policy formally known as *ethnic consolidation*, whilst the policy of Bantu education and propaganda (Radio Bantu) were used to entrench *traditional* values, preventing "social integration and cultural hybridization" (Harries 1989:105).

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[3] As we will see in chapter three, the sheer brutality of the account described bears resemblance to those of the imprecatory Psalms.

Initially, these homelands were ethnically diverse, but in the 1960's, the Apartheid government adopted a divide-and-rule approach, under which, the homelands were redefined according to *tribes*, and forced removals of peoples to their relevant homeland were undertaken (Harries 1989:105). The Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act (1970) was a deliberate ploy to stoke ethnic identities under the guise of bringing them to maturity (Harries 1989:106). Establishment of homelands and Bantustans, as well use manipulation of ethnic differences was a strategy employed by the Apartheid government to divide opposition movements, even within broader ethnic identities (Harries 1989:110). Marks (1989:215) records that the 1985 ethnic violence in Natal, was readily portrayed along ethnic lines, pitting the United Democratic Front, Zulu Inkatha movement and African National Congress against one another.

Furthermore, through various immigration control measures dating back to the Union of South Africa and promulgated throughout the Apartheid era, preferences were made for particular categories of legal immigrants – most usually White, Protestant Christians of Northern European/British ancestry (Harris 2001:n.p.) In order to accommodate these – and other White peoples from African nations – the Apartheid state also legislated an easier entry for preferred groups over any black African immigrant (Harris 2001:n.p.) Regrettably, these preferences were maintained to an extent in the legislation regarding migrants and refugees in post-1994 immigration legislation (Harris 2001:n.p.) Despite this, there was a definite uptake in refugees coming to South Africa post-1994, from nations such as Zimbabwe, DRC, Angola, Somalia and the Indian sub-continent (Allie 2006:n.p.) Apartheid legislation governing legal rights and citizenship would have a long-standing impact on the South African population's thinking, and is evidenced in the continued association of political status (citizenship) and the rights that are due to those without this status (Pillay 2013:77). Under Apartheid, black Africans were deemed to be *subjects* of the state, who were then only allowed residence in demarcated spaces, echoes in the creation of refugee camps (Pillay 2013:86) – where the vulnerable are further exposed to the expectation that they will *stay in their place*.

2.3.4   Xenophobic attacks in post-1994 South Africa

Ethnic riots are not a spontaneous event, and following the findings of Horowitz, Kaufman (2011:97) outlines three necessary precedents: historical and/or ongoing

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ethnic tensions, support from ethnic community leaders and sympathetic – or passive – security forces. When these elements are present, a single purported event or threat mobilises a mentality of us-versus-them and an ethnic riot (Kaufman 2011:97). Crush and Ramachandran (2010:209) note that whilst xenophobia is a longstanding occurrence in developed nations, it has increasingly taken root in developing nations as migration increases.

Early in the history of post-Apartheid South Africa, it was noted that immigrants – especially undocumented (illegal) immigrants – were poorly protected, and between 1994 and 2000, more than half a million illegal immigrants were deported from South Africa, in a deportation system known to be abusive and corrupt (Crush 2000:104). As early as 1995, concerns were voiced by human rights groups that South African society was becomingly increasingly hostile to immigrants, who, it was claimed competed for employment and contributed to increasing crime levels (Crush 2000:106). These attitudes sporadically resulted in public violence, such as the street violence of Johannesburg in 1996, against foreign vendors, and the murder of three non-South Africans on a train in 1998 (Crush 2000:106-107).

Survey data from the 1990s showed a significant percentage of the South African population believed that too many immigrants were in the country (87%), and when compared internationally, that South Africa has the dubious honour of being "among the most intolerant and hostile of people towards outsiders" (Crush 2000:108, 124). Policies limiting – or prohibiting – immigration ("restrictionist policy") are viewed favourably in South Africa, with an increase in support to nearly 80% between 1995 and 1999, and surveys showing that approximately two-thirds of the population believe immigrants are detrimental to the country (Crush 2000:108-109). The 1998 survey data showed that one third of respondents would actively dissuade involvement, and integration of immigrants in their community (Crush 2000:110).

1999 survey data showed that while support for police and legal protections for South African citizens is high, and moderate for legal immigrants, almost two-thirds of respondents felt these should be denied to illegal immigrants, along with social services, and a strong opposition to freedom of movement and speech of illegal immigrants (85%) (Crush 2000: 112,127). Confusion also exists between

undocumented migrants and refugees, and although half of respondents surveyed supporting protection by the South African government for refugees, only a fifth supported the government financing such protection (Crush 2000:113). Despite these attitudes, Crush (2000:117) found that only a small percentage of respondents would resort to violence, and indicates a latent xenophobia in South Africa.

Antagonism towards foreign African labourers and their economic successes was documented in the media in 2004 already, who – it was claimed – competed for jobs that were considered to be owing to South Africans (Allie 2006:n.p.; Zuberi & Sibanda 2004:1462-1463, 1486-1487). Even within the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), there was ambivalence (Hlatshwayo 2011:174-175): concern for the exploitation of migrant workers, and simultaneous concerns that foreign workers were a threat (owing to their lower wages and contribution to the burden of social services). That immigrants were shown to be statistically more likely to be employed than South African born internal migrants further strains ethnic tensions in South Africa (Zuberi & Sibanda 2004:1486-1487); Steinberg (2008:6-7)[4] demonstrates that this is often largely due to entrepreneurial pursuits, whilst Harris (2008:n.p) points to the "special dispensation" given to agriculture and mining industries to recruit foreign labour. In another precursory event, between 20 (official) and 40 (community claimed) Somalis were murdered in Cape Town townships in 2006 – begrudgingly admitted to be xenophobic by the police (Allie 2006:n.p)

In February 2008, a Catholic News Agency release condemned the raid of the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, a refugee shelter, as being clearly xenophobic (2008:n.p). Ethnic tensions and latent xenophobia rose to the surface in the xenophobic attacks publicised from 2008 onwards in South Africa. Between 11 and 26 May 2008, xenophobic violence claimed 62 lives and displaced thousands of foreigners (Steinberg 2008:2), impacting mainly black African foreign nationals, as well as Asian and South African nationals (Peberdy & Jara 2011:37). Initially centred in Alexandra township, rioting and violence spread through Diepsloot, Johannesburg city centre, Soweto, Thokoza, Thembisa, Boksburg, Ramaphosa and Jerusalem settlements in Ekhuruleni, then to localised outbursts in KwaZulu-Natal,

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[4] Steinberg was commissioned for an Institute for Security Studies Paper, South Africa's Xenophobic Eruption; published by the Institute for Security Studies, Tshwane.

Mpumalanga, Cape Town and Knysna (Steinberg 2008:2). The dispersion of xenophobic violence is in keeping with the fact that migrants have largely favoured the cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town (Crush & Ramachandran 2010:213). Some who fled the xenophobic violence in Alexandra found themselves again being targeted in Diepsloot (Hawley 2008:n.p.), also, the most violent outbursts were typically found in the most impoverished communities (Peberdy & Jara 2011:37). A particularly shocking incident was the burning alive of Mozambican Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave at Ramaphosa on 18 May 2008 (Steinberg 2008:2).

The first official statement by the South African President, Thabo Mbeki, was made on 25 May 2008, fully two weeks after the onset of xenophobic violence, and a day later, on the 26 May 2008, Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula declared that the violence had been contained, and that 1384 people were arrested for xenophobic violence (Steinberg 2008:2). Reports from Alexandra and Primrose also show the inexplicable reality that violence was not only committed by mobs from other regions or districts, but sometimes "attackers were some of their [victims'] closest neighbours" (Gordin & Whitaker 2011:n.p).

The ethnic nature of the discrimination is particularly evident in the reports of the xenophobic violence in the Beirut region of Alexandra, where non-Zulu South Africans were displaced along with foreign nationals:

> "The Venda speakers who were chased away were told their [sic] that homeland is so close to Zimbabwe that they are not South Africans. Shangaans were told that because they share the same language as Mozambicans, they must run away with their Mozambican brothers" (Steinberg 2008:6)

However, the ethnic motivations of the xenophobic violence remain unspoken and taboo in much of South African society (Steinberg 2008:10). Vromans *et al* (2009:90) note the irony of the perpetuation of bias by those who were themselves disadvantaged under Apartheid. Reasons that were proposed for the 2008 xenophobic attacks were lack of service delivery, perceived competition with immigrants for healthcare, schooling, employment and partners, as well as the presence of non-documented (illegal) immigrants and criminal acts blamed on them (Vromans *et al* 2009:90; Zuberi & Sibanda 2004:1463-1464). Adjai & Lazardis

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(2014:237) argue that the success of the democratisation of South Africa has in fact led to this situation, as migrants from across the nation have been drawn to South Africa, in search of political stability and greater economic opportunity.

Recalling the usage of *makwerekwere* mentioned in section 2.2.2 refers to this discussion as well – Desai (2010:99-100) explains how *makwerekwere* is a derisory term, used to indicate one who is not only foreign, but uncultured, uncultured, or 'lesser'. Adding to the perceived difference and threat of the other national, the – rightful- isolation of South Africa from free engagement with other African states during Apartheid maintained South African exceptionalism (Matsinhe 2011: 297, 301). During much of South Africa's history – from colonial times to the present day – the country has been considered, and considered itself to be separate from Africa – a nation with more in common with the West than with Africa (Matsinhe 2011:301).

In the event that this report detailed only xenophobic attacks post-1994 up-to-and-including 2008, it would be sufficient to establish the reality of ethnic discrimination and violence in the New South Africa. However, the continued tensions were noticeable all the while leading up to more recent events (Chigeza et al 2013:501). In January 2009, three foreign nationals were identified as *makwerekwere* and thrown off the fifth floor of a building in Durban, and only one surviving[5] (Desai 2010:100). Majavu (2009:n.p.) reported an uncomfortably reminiscent scenario in Western Cape townships in June 2009: members of the local community (Gugulethu particularly) met to discuss the *problem* of foreign nationals who ran businesses in the townships and the perceived danger they posed; informal, South African owned businesses in the area agreed upon the need to remove the undesired elements (Somali shopkeepers); warning material was distributed to foreign shop owners. Similarly, deaths of foreign nationals in the townships reported on by Majavu (2009:n.p.), were dismissed as ordinary crime and not investigated on the basis of their xenophobic nature. When large-scale xenophobic violence has erupted, it has often been civil society that has responded with haste, but often with the expectation of official intervention and aid – which does not always materialise (Amisi 2011:75).

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[5] Amisi et al (2011:71) likewise note the disturbing implication of the involvement of a Durban City Councillor in this debacle

In 2010, South Africa hosted the FIFA Soccer World Cup, and although publicity showed a welcoming country, concerns arose that xenophobic violence would resurge after the soccer event (Boyle 2010:8) The South African government established a committee to prevent such a recurrence (Boyle 2010:8), however, as the soccer event drew to a close, foreign nationals were increasingly receiving verbal threats from citizens along with growing hostility (Johnston 2010:n.p.; Stephen 2010:4). IRIN, a news agency initially established by the UN, reported widespread expectation that foreigners would be targeted post July 2010 (2010a:n.p.), fears which would be realised as early as 13 July 2010 (IRIN 2010b:n.p.) Persistent fear and threats of xenophobic violence would continue through 2011 (SAPA 2011:2; Deklerk 2011:n.p.) Diplomatic troubles would quickly be associated with xenophobia in 2012 with threats of retaliatory action against South African businesses abroad (SAPA 2012a:n.p.), and reciprocal deportation of South Africans from Nigeria (Patel 2012:n.p.) By July 2012, South Africa had racked up an ominous string of fresh xenophobic violence (SAPA 2012b:n.p): 8 people injured and more than 270 displaced, in addition to attacks on 42 foreign owned shops/businesses.

The six reported attacks this year had resulted in the injury of at least eight victims, with 42 shops and businesses burnt or looted, 273 people arrested and more than 600 displaced. Police were reportedly complicit in the xenophobic targeting of foreign business owners (IRIN 2012a:n.p.), and in Johannesburg, open threats were circulated warning of planned dispossession, murder and rape of foreigners (Parker 2012:n.p.) Sikhosana (2013:n.p.) recorded the spectacle of the looting of five foreign owned shops in Diepsloot in 2013, and not surprisingly, immigrants continued to live with an insecurity about their fate in South Africa (Boitiaux 2013:n.p), as xenophobic attitudes continued to fester through 2014 (SAPA 2014:n.p).

Just as May 2008 is a key event in the discourse of xenophobia in South Africa, April 2015 saw the greatest continuous outbreak of xenophobic violence since 2008 (Vollgraaf 2015:18). Latent xenophobic attitudes exploded into xenophobic violence, starting in Durban, in response to an opinion expressed by the Zulu monarch (IRIN 2015:n.p.; Sidimba 2015:2; Stolley 2015:n.p.), with 5 deaths in Durban, and the spread of violence to Johannesburg (Wendling 2015:n.p) and causing diplomatic rifts with economic implications for South Africa and businesses operated by South

Africans across the African continent (Bateman 2015:n.p.; Essa & Patel 2015:n.p.; Mataboge & Hunter 2015:3).

2.3.5 Traditional and struggle songs used to engender ethnic discrimination

Hsiung (2005:23) describes the centrality of songs and music in resistance movements, particularly in the American Civil Rights movement, and finds poignancy in the words of Martin Luther King Junior: "These songs bind us together, give us courage together, help us march together". The practice of appropriating existing songs (and modifying them) has a rich history, and was evident in the abolitionist and labour movements of the twentieth century (Hsiung 2005:23). A favourite source of materials for these movements has typically been hymns and spirituals, which were either modified in advance or as the occasion arose, and contributed to a sense of communal identity and emancipation (Hsiung 2005:23). Singing such songs was done *en masse*, and sometimes preceded formal business or protest with the act of communal singing more important than the actual songs and/or lyrics (Hsiung 2005:24).

Omitandu poetry of the Herereo people of Namibia served as resistance poems in the face of growing political influence by Apartheid South Africa, and took care to encode the grievances to avoid further subjugation (Hoffmann 2007:42). Such omitandu both retell the historical events and provide opportunity for discussion within the target community, and further allow the community to call to memory the related events that may only be alluded to (Hoffmann 2007:45, 49). In pre-Union of South Africa Cape Town, the Emancipation Act of 1834 introduced the traditional Cape parades by former slaves, who like the Herereo would include subtle allusions to their distress and plight in songs, and has at times been recognised as a form of resistance against White exploitation (Davids 2013:95, 99). During the 1980s, toyi-toyi as a form of protest emerged as a powerful communication medium for the oppressed populace – rhythmic chanting of protest songs served to engage the community and agitate for change (Twala & Koetaan 2006:164). Self-expression through song is a strong communicator in African culture, especially when it conveys thoughts/statements that could otherwise not be said (Twala & Koetaan 2006:166). The lyrics accompanying these protests ranged the spectrum from expressions of

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discontent to appeals for change, and even personal attacks on particular politicians (Twala & Koetaan 2006:169-171).

Outside of South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) commissioned two theatrical forays to raise awareness of the oppression of Apartheid and the struggle against it, namely *Mayibuye* and *Amandla* (Gilbert 2007:421). *Mayibuye* made use of the contemporary protest (freedom) songs in South Africa and later songs that rose to prominence following the 1976 Soweto Uprising (Gilbert 2007:426-427). *Mayibuye's* successor, *Amandla* was in operation from 1978 until 1990, and participants (who often had military training, were to prioritise the group's cultural efforts over combat (Gilbert 2007:429-430; 432-433). Jonas Gwangwa was among the principal composers for *Amandla* (Gilbert 2007:432), and had the express aim to effect diplomatic change in South Africa through cultural expression (Szymczak 2006:56-57). As with the American Civil Rights Movement, Gwangwa drew much inspiration from songs and hymns, adapting them to reflect South African culture (Szymczak 2006:57, 59). So significant did existing and new freedom songs become for the African populace that they continued to be sung even after the ANC leadership had been decimated by exile and imprisonment (Groenewald 2005:125). Resistance figures Desmond Tutu and Ronnie Kasrils readily attribute the success of the struggle against Apartheid to the usage of protest songs and toyi-toyi (Groenewald 2005:135). Caesarina Makhoere, who was imprisoned for six years during Apartheid, found that the singing of protest songs in prisons helped perseverance of imprisoned activists (Dietche 1995:69,71). These songs permeated not only active resistance, but also the very spirit of resistance of the oppressed populace, and accompanied protest, threats of violence and funerals (Boesak 2011:2). By and large, the usage and application of protest songs is broader in post-1994 South Africa – these songs have been used for celebratory events, as well as to express ire at the ANC government's failings (Groenewald 2010:126).

Regrettably, in South Africa, protest songs were not only directed at the oppressors, but also against other ethnicities who may well be experiencing the same oppression. The practice of portraying other ethnicities disparagingly in song is reflected in the practice of colonists. Kimani explains that in British-occupied Kenya, precolonial messages were actively incorporated into the arts, and were often

disparaging of the African populace (2010:253). In Apartheid South Africa, political units could only be formed along ethnic lines – such as the Zulu Inkatha organization, the Ximoko and Gazankulu Women's Association (Harries 1989:107). Within the homelands, songs praising a particular ethnicity, whilst decrying another, were actively used to entrench ethnic identity and competitive ethnic discrimination (Harries 1989:109). Such popular songs would call for violent attacks on competing tribes, condemn intermarriage, or ridicule the customs, cooking or hygiene of other ethnicities (Harries 1989:109).

During the 2006 rape trial of Jacob Zuma, supporters missappropriated the freedom song "'awulethu umshini wam' (bring me my machine gun)" and called for the death of the woman who brought the charge (Hassim 2009:455). The crowds in support of Jacob Zuma varied between 50 and several thousand, and appropriated a range of protest songs to express their support for Zuma (Groenewald 2010:128, 130-134). It is significant that anti-Apartheid freedom songs were appropriated during the xenophobic violence of 2008 (Steinberg 2008:3). On four occasions in March 2010, former ANC Youth League leader, Julius Malema recited a struggle song, *Ayesaba Amagwala (Dubul'ibhunu)*, causing uproar around the lyrics calling to "kill the boer" (Pillay 2013:221-222). The respondents in the Equality Court case (Afri-Forum v Julius Sello Malema 2011 12 BCLR 1289) argued that the history of the song in the liberation – and by extension South African social history – warrants its usage and preservation (Pillay 2013:221, 223). Other litigations regarding the usage of *Dubul'ibhunu* occurred in 2003 when the SAHRC first found the lyrics not to be in contention of hate speech legislation, and then after appeal found that the songs may well incite violence (Pillay 2013:223-224). In 2010, an urgent application was granted to prevent the usage of *Dibul'ibhunu* in a planned protest march (Pillay 2013:224). As concerns the Afri-forum v Julius Sello Malema case, some of the Equality Court's findings were (Pillay 2013:229-230):

> "Political speech made in public must be taken to be communicated to the public at large … hate speech lacks value as political speech, and overrides the 'pursuit of truth' … in that it makes no direct contribution to it and denies the recognition of rights."

Of interest for this study is that the Equality Court found that *Dibul'ibhunu* – along with several other protest songs – were a form of indoctrination of fighters, and a

means to further their camaraderie whilst simultaneously devalue the lives of their enemies (Pillay 2013:231-232).

Further examination of the role of media in instigating ethnic violence will be examined in chapter 4.

2.4 Conclusion

Africa has a long history of ethnic discrimination, particularly during colonial governance. Tragically, these ideologies, and mythologies of superior ethnicities persisted in post-Colonial Africa, advanced for political benefit and occasionally evidenced in violent outbursts. Official, state-sanctioned promotion of ideologies (propaganda) is often found in the education systems of a country, such as the procolonial history and values woven into the British occupied Kenyan syllabus (Kimani 2010:253). These ideologies may take generations to dispel, and recent South African experience bears witness.

It is tempting to presume that there will always be ethnic tension and conflict, but Cordell & Wolff (2011:10) offer hope:

> "Ethnic conflict is not a natural or inevitable phenomenon. It has its causes in human choices and actions predicated upon individually and collectively subjective perceptions of reality … and the course of action adopted"

Hughes (2011:137) concedes that despite the plethora of academic research on genocides, there is no working model to predict the boiling point of "state anxieties and societal antagonisms". Where ethnic identities dominate societal interactions, they challenge nation-building and are often sources of conflict in the Third World (Smith 2008:207-208).

South Africa, as we have seen is a desperately divided society which still struggles to accept its African nature in harmony with Western ideals and capitalism. The historic burden of legislated – and unlegislated – discrimination and enculturation of supremacist is great, and in a fragile society as ours, is tinder for violence. As we will discover in later chapters, the policies of the post-Apartheid government have – at times – fostered fear and/or scorn of foreigners as well as entrenching a racialised

society; the silence (denialism) of government during violent xenophobic attacks shows both a passive acceptance of the acts, and a subtle affirmation that the lives of citizens of this country are held in greater esteem.

It is with these realities in mind that we turn our focus to the next chapter, an exegetical study of the Imprecatory Psalms, with particular attention to Psalm 83, seeking to find an understanding of these Psalms that may be of therapeutic benefit for victims of ethnic violence.

Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION TO IMPRECATORY PSALMS

Commonality is found in the poetic tradition of wisdom literature and early Mesopotamian poetic works, where appeals to the gods are common, as are pieces praising them, although, a distinct Israelite view is evident in the Israelite wisdom literature (Pleins 2001:419). The title 'Psalms' is derived from various potential sources: ψαλμοι (*psalmoi*, in the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus codices) or ψαλτεριον (*psalterion* In the Codex Alexandrinus) (Crenshaw 2001:3). *Mizmor* is closely related to psalmoi, and is included in the superscriptions of just over a third of the psalms (Gunkel 1998:333). In the Hebrew, the Masoretic text favours the term *Tepillôt* (prayers) whilst the rabbinic texts prefer *Tehillîm* and *Tillîm* (praises), and so, whilst these may be seen as complimentary descriptions for the function of the Psalms (Crenshaw 2001:3) *Tehillîm* and variants were the preferred terms of Aramaic speakers (Gunkel 1998:333). Prominent themes - "allusions to literary-historical events" - in the psalms are creation, the exile, the Davidic monarchy and the related covenants (Emanuel 2012:1).

3.1   Structure and characteristics of the Imprecatory Psalms

The role of the Imprecatory Psalms within the Christian context has been questioned, due to both their expressive pleas and worldview (Vos 2005:263). Indeed, these are certainly amongst those characterised as "embarrassingly vengeful" by Crenshaw (2001:1). Typically, the Imprecatory Psalms involve a plea that God would bring vengeance upon the enemies of his people, one which they do not themselves enact (Bullock 2001:228, 234; Craven 1992:50, 52; Douglas & Tenney 2011:645; Schultz 1975:265). Imprecation, understood as a plea for vengeance, is not an exclusively Old Testament phenomenon, and is found throughout the Bible (Douglas & Tenney 2011:645).

Hermann Gunkel pioneered the use of historical criticism of biblical literature to establish *Gattungen,* or a form that would account for the function of literature within a community, through comparison of similar pieces from the date of composition (Ferris 1992:2) along with the religion and mythology of Mesopotamian culture

(Emanuel 2012:4). Form-criticism recognises the following types of Psalms: lament (communal/individual), thanksgiving (communal/individual), royal, wisdom and law (torah), "entrance liturgies, prophetic exhortation, and mixed forms" (Crenshaw 2001:6). As we will see in our discussion and form analysis in section 3.2.4, there is debate as to the genre *imprecatory psalms*, with many preferring the form-critical approach identifying *imprecatory elements* within the communal laments. Craven (1992:50-51) identifies imprecatory statements in approximately twenty psalms, whilst finding that the following psalms are mostly devoted to imprecation: 7, 35, 58, 59, 69, 83, 109, 137 and 140.

Communal laments, according to Gunkel (1998:82), include Psalms 44, 74, 79, 80, 83 and at least parts of Psalms 9, 10, 12, 33, 53, 60, 68, 77, 82, 85, 89, 90, 94, 104, 108, 115, 123, 126, 129, 132 and 144. Evidence of a sub-genre of communal lament, the *curse wish* is noted by Gunkel in Psalms 83 and 137, meaning a petition for God's intervention, continued in a plea for the destruction of the enemy (1998:90; 234). Indeed, the *complaint prayer* component in these psalms serves to bring to the fore that the enemies of Israel oppress not only Israel, but the dignity of God himself (Gunkel 1998:91). Ferris (1992:10) provides an extensive definition of the communal lament:

> "… a composition whose verbal content indicated that it was composed to be used by and/or on behalf of a community to express both complaint, and sorrow and grief over some perceived calamity, physical or cultural, which had befallen or was about to befall them and to appeal to God for deliverance" (1992:10)

Developing Gunkel's form criticism, Mowinckel suggested the cultic role of the psalms as an alternate approach to classifying the psalms, identifying sacrificial and sacramental elements and divisions (1962b:44). The consideration of the content and mood of the Psalms was used by Mowinckel to determine a cultic function for the Psalms in the Israelite national consciousness (Ferris 1992:5). Further discussion of the sacramental aspect of communal laments continues in section 3.2.6 in the discussion of tradition. A cultic interpretation for the internal shift from lament to praise in the lament psalms has been suggested by Begrich, namely an "inferred priestly oracle of salvation", however, the oracular form is absent in these psalms (Lee 2005:225).

Whereas the cultic aspects of the communal laments could be considered the *passive* response to the calamity (present or impending), the *active* response is found in the blessing and curse formulae[6]. In sacramental psalms, such as individual and community laments, the "effectual word" comes into play, whereby, the curse or blessing is understood to be a creative act within itself (Mowinckel 1962b:44). Utterance of blessings on matters of family, business, war and power, whilst being effectual, relied on the right standing of those pronouncing a blessing, an equally important requirement of those who would pronounce a curse (Mowinckel 1962b:45). The effectual nature of a blessing, in Israelite thinking, is indivisible from the creative power of the deity, namely, Yahweh, and, significantly, the most powerful blessings invoked Yahweh's name (Mowinckel 1962b:46). Hence, Mowinckel explains, "Yahweh is the subject of the verb of blessing" (1962b:46).

Antithetical to the blessing, is the curse, which also appeals to divine power but in this case to bring destruction, failure and disaster, to the extent that the one cursed is bereft of any value in life and of life itself (Mowinckel 1962b:48). Profoundly, a curse is not limited to the individual, but carries a communal and familial connotation, such that any involvement with the cursed individual brings the curse upon oneself, and may even involve demonic forces (Mowinckel 1962b:48). Just as a blessing is only effected on one who is in right standing, so a curse is only effective over those who are in wrong standing, excluding the righteous, who are under God's protection (Mowinckel 1962b:48). Symbolic gestures involving pointing, head-shaking, and even thoughts can be considered curses, along with cultic activities and prayers to bring destruction (Mowinckel 1962b:49).

3.2   Exegetical study of Psalm 83

Exegesis entails any attempt to understand a text or statement, a process which is often intuitive in communication, but with written communication is affected by the commonality of the reader with the author's environment, experience and language and the technicality of the language employed (Hayes & Holladay 2007:1-2, 4). Complications ("barriers") in this process with regard to biblical exegesis are (Hayes

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[6] These terms are suggested by the present writer, where *passive* is taken to mean the posture of the people (prostration) taken to rouse God to action, and *active* is taken to mean the pronouncement of blessings and/or curses, presuming that God would act thereupon.

& Holladay 2007:12-15): the bible was written to ancient readers, in ancient languages and with a distinct Mesopotamian culture; there is also a notable historical gap of several millennia, which also permits the collation and redaction of texts and the growth of traditions, as well as introduces the complication of copies of manuscripts that are still in use. Faced with these barriers, exegesis requires a systematic approach and to arrive at an "informed understanding of the text" using the disciplines developed and research conducted in biblical exegesis as a framework (Hayes & Holladay 2007:21).

The text before us in this study is Psalm 83, which was electively chosen as a paradigmatic example. Before proceeding with pericope, structural analysis and the various critical methods and steps, the psalm is presented as in an English translation (ESV) and the Hebrew text (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia 4th edition, electronic version (WTT):

Psalm 83:1-18, ESV	Psalm 83:1-19, WTT
A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.	¹ שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְאָסָף׃
¹ O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God!	² אֱלֹהִים אַל־דֳּמִי־לָךְ אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ וְאַל־תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל׃
² For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads.	³ כִּי־הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יֶהֱמָיוּן וּמְשַׂנְאֶיךָ נָשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ׃
³ They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones.	⁴ עַל־עַמְּךָ יַעֲרִימוּ סוֹד וְיִתְיָעֲצוּ עַל־צְפוּנֶיךָ׃
⁴ They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!"	⁵ אָמְרוּ לְכוּ וְנַכְחִידֵם מִגּוֹי וְלֹא־יִזָּכֵר שֵׁם־יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד׃
⁵ For they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant-	⁶ כִּי נוֹעֲצוּ לֵב יַחְדָּו עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ׃
⁶ the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites,	⁷ אָהֳלֵי אֱדוֹם וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִים מוֹאָב וְהַגְרִים׃
⁷ Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;	⁸ גְּבָל וְעַמּוֹן וַעֲמָלֵק פְּלֶשֶׁת עִם־יֹשְׁבֵי צוֹר׃
⁸ Asshur also has joined them;	⁹ גַּם־אַשּׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם הָיוּ זְרוֹעַ לִבְנֵי־לוֹט סֶלָה׃
	¹⁰ עֲשֵׂה־לָהֶם כְּמִדְיָן כְּסִיסְרָא כְיָבִין בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן׃
	¹¹ נִשְׁמְדוּ בְעֵין־דֹּאר הָיוּ דֹּמֶן לָאֲדָמָה׃

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they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. Selah
⁹ Do to them as you did to Midian,
as to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon,
¹⁰ who were destroyed at En-dor,
who became dung for the ground.
¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
¹²who said, "Let us take possession for ourselves of the pastures of God."
¹³ O my God, make them like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind.
¹⁴ As fire consumes the forest, as the flame sets the mountains ablaze,
¹⁵ so may you pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your hurricane!
¹⁶ Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek your name, O Lord.
¹⁷ Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever;
let them perish in disgrace,
¹⁸ that they may know that you alone, whose name is the Lord,
are the Most High over all the earth.

¹² שִׁיתֵמוֹ נְדִיבֵמוֹ כְּעֹרֵב וְכִזְאֵב וּכְזֶבַח
וּכְצַלְמֻנָּע כָּל־נְסִיכֵמוֹ:
¹³ אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ נִירֲשָׁה לָּנוּ אֵת נְאוֹת
אֱלֹהִים:
¹⁴ אֱלֹהַי שִׁיתֵמוֹ כַגַּלְגַּל כְּקַשׁ לִפְנֵי־רוּחַ:
¹⁵ כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר־יָעַר וּכְלֶהָבָה תְּלַהֵט הָרִים:
¹⁶ כֵּן תִּרְדְּפֵם בְּסַעֲרֶךָ וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תְבַהֲלֵם:
¹⁷ מַלֵּא פְנֵיהֶם קָלוֹן וִיבַקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה:
¹⁸ יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ עֲדֵי־עַד וְיַחְפְּרוּ וְיֹאבֵדוּ:
¹⁹ וְיֵדְעוּ כִּי־אַתָּה שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה לְבַדֶּךָ עֶלְיוֹן
עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

For the remainder of this chapter, the exegesis will follow the Hebrew numbering for clarity[7].

3.2.1   Pericope definition and structural analysis

Snyman (2008:64) offers the following definition of pericope: "a demarcated structural and semantic unit based on characteristics in a specific text". Placing limits on a pericope requires respect for the text itself as well as the authorial intent, as manipulation of a text by including additional lines is a risk (Snyman 2008:63-64). However, as chapter divisions and *perashim* (divisions in the Hebrew bibles) are not original to the manuscripts, the following criteria are useful: presence of duplications and repetitions, tensions evidenced in different names used in the same/successive

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[7] When referring to other texts, the standard English numbering will be employed

accounts, standard introductory formulas, movement or changes in vocabulary, or changes in the setting of an account (Snyman 2008:64-65).

Given that the process of defining a periscope for this study is relatively straightforward, we will now consider structural analysis. Following the Hebrew practice of including the superscription in the verse count, Psalm 83 has 19 verses, and will be the convention employed in this study.

Terrien provides the following strophic outline (2003:592-595):

Introduction

I   The Name of Israel and the Name of Yahweh (vv. 2-5);
II   The History of Enmity against Israel (vv. 6-9);
III   Those Who Seek the Pastures of God (vv. 10-13);
IV   Death to Them All! (vv. 14-17);
Envoi: Shame and disgrace over against Yahweh's Name (vv. 18-19).

Although noting the presence of lament, Terrien (2003:593) notes the progression to a "hymnal invitation". The present writer has provided a translation drawing on data from the Hebrew-English Interlinear Old Testament Analysis by McDaniel[8], divided into strophes as per Terrien (2003):

Table 1: Stophic division of Psalm 83 by Terrien with author's translation

Stanza	Strophe	Verse	Author's Translation	Hebrew Text
		1	(A) song (a) psalm (accompanied song) to/of Asaph	שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְאָסָף׃
A	I	2a	(O) God, do not (be) silent/at rest	אֱלֹהִים אַל־דֳּמִי־לָךְ
		2b	do not be silent and do not be quiet	אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ וְאַל־תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל׃
		3a	For, behold, your enemies roar (emphatic)	כִּי־הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יֶהֱמָיוּן
		3b	and the ones who hate you have	וּמְשַׂנְאֶיךָ נָשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ׃

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[8] McDaniel, C n.d. The Hebrew-English Reverse Interlinear Old Testament English Version. Bellingham: Logos Bible Software.

Stanza	Strophe	Verse	Author's Translation	Hebrew Text
			raised head	
		4a	Against your people they have been crafty, a confidential discussion (is held)	עַל־עַמְּךָ יַעֲרִימוּ סֹוד
		4b	and they plan against the ones who shelter in you.	וְיִתְיָעֲצוּ עַל־צְפוּנֶיךָ:
		5a	They say, "Come! Let us make them disappear from (among) people	אָמְרוּ לְכוּ וְנַכְחִידֵם מִגֹּוי
		5b	And/so (it) will not be remembered, the name of Israel, any longer	וְלֹא־יִזָּכֵר שֵׁם־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹוד:
B	II	6a	Because they plan (in) heart together	כִּי נֹועֲצוּ לֵב יַחְדָּו
		6b	against you they cut a covenant	עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ:
		7a	the tents of Edom, and (the Ishmaelites)	אָהֳלֵי אֱדֹום וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִים
		7b	Moab and (the) Hagrites	מֹואָב וְהַגְרִים:
		8a	Gebal and Ammon and Amalek	גְּבָל וְעַמֹּון וַעֲמָלֵק
		8b	Philistia and the ones who dwell in Tyre	פְּלֶשֶׁת עִם־יֹשְׁבֵי צֹור:
		9a	Also (even) Asshur has enjoined with them	גַּם־אַשּׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם
		9b	They are (the) force (strength, arm) of the sons of Lot, Selah	הָיוּ זְרֹועַ לִבְנֵי־לֹוט סֶלָה:
C	III	10a	Do to them like Midian	עֲשֵׂה־לָהֶם כְּמִדְיָן
		10b	like Sisera, like Jabin, at (the) river Kishon	כְּסִיסְרָא כְיָבִין בְּנַחַל קִישֹׁון:

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Stanza	Strophe	Verse	Author's Translation	Hebrew Text
		11a	They were destroyed at En-dor	נִשְׁמְדוּ בְעֵין־דֹּאר
		11b	they became dung for/to the earth	הָיוּ דֹּמֶן לָאֲדָמֶה:
		12a	Ordain (cause) their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb	שִׁיתֵמוֹ נְדִיבֵמוֹ כְּעֹרֵב וְכִזְאֵב
		12b	Like Zevah and like Zalmunna all their princes (leaders)	וּכְזֶבַח וּכְצַלְמֻנָּע כָּל־נְסִיכֵמוֹ:
		13a	Who said, "let us take possession for ourselves … "	אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ נִירֲשָׁה לָּנוּ
		13b	"… the grazing places (pastures, settlements) of God."	אֵת נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים:
D	IV	14a	My God, cause to occur (ordain) them like tumbleweed	אֱלֹהַי שִׁיתֵמוֹ כַגַּלְגַּל
		14b	like chaff before the wind	כְּקַשׁ לִפְנֵי־רוּחַ:
		15a	Like fire consumes a forest	כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר־יָעַר
		15b	and like a flame sets ablaze the mountains	וּכְלֶהָבָה תְּלַהֵט הָרִים:
		16a	So you pursue them with your tempest	כֵּן תִּרְדְּפֵם בְּסַעֲרֶךָ
		16b	and with your hurricane terrify them.	וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תְבַהֲלֵם:
		17a	Fill their faces with shame	מַלֵּא פְנֵיהֶם קָלוֹן
		17b	And (that) they may seek your name YHYH	וִיבַקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה:
E	Envoi	18a	Let them be shamed and let them be dismayed for ever	יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ עֲדֵי־עַד
		18b	let them have disgrace and let them perish	וְיַחְפְּרוּ וְיֹאבֵדוּ:
		19a	And let them know	וְיֵדְעוּ

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Stanza	Strophe	Verse	Author's Translation	Hebrew Text
		19b	That you, your name, is YHWH, you alone	כִּי־אַתָּ֤ה שִׁמְךָ֣ יְהוָ֣ה לְבַדֶּ֑ךָ
		19c	(You are) Elyon (Most High) over all the earth.	עֶ֝לְיֹ֗ון עַל־כָּל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃

The masoretic analysis of the disjunctives shows that the main disjunctives employed are the 'Atnāḥ and Sillûq, resulting in the following line allocations:

Table 2: Psalm 83 divided into lines according to dividing disjunctives

Dividing Disjunctive	Verse	Line	Hebrew Text
Sillûq	1	1	שִׁ֖יר מִזְמֹ֣ור לְאָסָֽף׃
'Atnāḥ	2a	2	אֱלֹהִ֥ים אַל־דֳּמִי־לָ֑ךְ
Sillûq	2b	3	אַל־תֶּחֱרַ֖שׁ וְאַל־תִּשְׁקֹ֣ט אֵֽל׃
-'Atnāḥ	3a	4	כִּֽי־הִנֵּ֣ה אֹ֭ויְבֶיךָ יֶהֱמָי֑וּן
Sillûq	3b	5	וּ֝מְשַׂנְאֶ֗יךָ נָ֣שְׂאוּ רֹֽאשׁ׃
'Atnāḥ	4a	6	עַֽל־עַ֭מְּךָ יַעֲרִ֣ימוּ סֹ֑וד
Sillûq	4b	7	וְ֝יִתְיָעֲצ֗וּ עַל־צְפוּנֶֽיךָ׃
'Atnāḥ	5a	8	אָמְר֗וּ לְ֭כוּ וְנַכְחִידֵ֣ם מִגֹּ֑וי
Sillûq	5b	9	וְלֹֽא־יִזָּכֵ֖ר שֵֽׁם־יִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל עֹֽוד׃
'Atnāḥ	6a	10	כִּ֤י נֹועֲצ֣וּ לֵ֣ב יַחְדָּ֑ו
Sillûq	6b	11	עָ֝לֶ֗יךָ בְּרִ֣ית יִכְרֹֽתוּ׃
Reḇîᵃ gādōl	7a	12	אָהֳלֵ֣י אֱ֭דֹום וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִ֗ים
Sillûq	7b	13	מֹואָ֥ב וְהַגְרִֽים׃
'Atnāḥ	8a	14	גְּבָ֣ל וְ֭עַמֹּון וַעֲמָלֵ֑ק
Sillûq	8b	15	פְּ֝לֶ֗שֶׁת עִם־יֹ֥שְׁבֵי צֹֽור׃
'Atnāḥ	9a	16	גַּם־אַ֭שּׁוּר נִלְוָ֣ה עִמָּ֑ם

Dividing Disjunctive	Verse	Line	Hebrew Text
Sillûq	9b	17	הָיֽוּ זְר֗וֹעַ לִבְנֵי־ל֥וֹט סֶֽלָה׃
ʾAtnāḥ	10a	18	עֲשֵֽׂה־לָהֶ֥ם כְּמִדְיָ֑ן
Sillûq	10b	19	כְּסִֽיסְרָ֥א כְיָבִ֖ין בְּנַ֥חַל קִישֽׁוֹן׃
ʾAtnāḥ	11a	20	נִשְׁמְד֥וּ בְעֵֽין־דֹּ֑אר
Sillûq	11b	21	הָ֥יוּ דֹּ֝֗מֶן לָאֲדָמָֽה׃
ʾAtnāḥ	12a	22	שִׁיתֵ֣מוֹ נְ֭דִיבֵמוֹ כְּעֹרֵ֣ב וְכִזְאֵ֑ב
Sillûq	12b	23	וּֽכְזֶ֥בַח וּכְצַלְמֻנָּ֗ע כָּל־נְסִיכֵֽמוֹ׃
ʾAtnāḥ	13a	24	אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָ֭מְרוּ נִ֣ירֲשָׁה לָּ֑נוּ
Sillûq	13b	25	אֵ֝֗ת נְא֣וֹת אֱלֹהִֽים׃
ʾAtnāḥ	14a	26	אֱֽלֹהַ֗י שִׁיתֵ֥מוֹ כַגַּלְגַּ֑ל
Sillûq	14b	27	כְּ֝קַ֗שׁ לִפְנֵי־רֽוּחַ׃
ʾAtnāḥ	15a	28	כְּאֵ֥שׁ תִּבְעַר־יָ֑עַר
Sillûq	15b	29	וּ֝כְלֶהָבָ֗ה תְּלַהֵ֥ט הָרִֽים׃
ʾAtnāḥ	16a	30	כֵּ֭ן תִּרְדְּפֵ֣ם בְּסַעֲרֶ֑ךָ
Sillûq	16b	31	וּבְסוּפָתְךָ֥ תְבַהֲלֵֽם׃
ʾAtnāḥ	17a	32	מַלֵּ֣א פְנֵיהֶ֣ם קָל֑וֹן
Sillûq	17b	33	וִֽיבַקְשׁ֖וּ שִׁמְךָ֣ יְהוָֽה׃
Rᵉḇîᵃ gāḏōl	18a	34	יֵבֹ֖שׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲל֥וּ עֲדֵי־עַ֑ד
Sillûq	18b	35	וְֽיַחְפְּר֥וּ וְיֹאבֵֽדוּ׃
Rᵉḇîᵃ gāḏōl	19a	36	וְֽיֵדְע֗וּ
ʾAtnāḥ	19b	37	כִּֽי־אַתָּ֬ה שִׁמְךָ֣ יְהוָ֣ה לְבַדֶּ֑ךָ
Sillûq	19c	38	עֶ֝לְי֗וֹן עַל־כָּל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃

A full table detailing these analyses and verb parsing is provided in Appendix A.

3.2.2 Contextual analysis

Historical criticism dominated exegetical studies from the mid-nineteenth century (Barton 1998:9), whilst form-critical analysis of the psalms in the twentieth century by Hermann Gunkel yielded the methodology of studying the context of the psalms, in terms of their Near Eastern origins (Emanuel 2012:4). This form-critical approach has been authoritative and instrumental in twentieth century studies of the psalms (Brueggemann 1995:4).

Gunkel further defined a life setting (*Sitz im Leben)* for each Psalm (Emanuel 2012:4); as concerns Psalm 83, the setting would be a cultic fast (*ṣōm*), "a great complaint festival which the community … [held] in response to general calamities" (Gunkel 1998:82). Such festivals included the entire community, were centred around the Temple (sanctuary), and would be widely announced, in the face of present, potential or seemingly inevitable disasters (Gunkel 1998:82-83). Community laments in the psalms are organised around three main themes by Pleins (1993:35-38):

Table 3: Crises facing Israel as themes and occasion for Communal Laments

Event Title	Community Event	Associated Psalms
A Community Devastated	The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 587BCE	74, 79, 137
A Community Defeated	Military defeats, especially by Babylon	44, 60, 83, 108
A Community Plundered	The removal of the property, persons and wealth of a community, possibly related to military defeat	12, 80, 129

The naming of various enemy nation-states in Psalm 83 may be of assistance in dating this psalm, especially as they are presented as an "advancing coalition" (Pleins 1993:37). Psalm 83's specificity with regard to enemy nations is considered

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reliable by Mowinckel (1962a:197). In terms of historical epochs, the rise of several nation-states listed in Psalm 83 ("Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre") correspond broadly with the Iron Age, spanning 1200 – 586BCE (Moore & Kelle 2011:13). Assyria as an empire held immense sway, and at its zenith, was the dominant power over the Near East, a territory extending from "Egypt to Iran … Babylonia to Anatolia" (Fuchs 2011:380). A combination of the resilience of Assyrian institutions and culture and shrewd military deployment left Assyria the dominant power in the Near East after the recession of other competing powers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries BCE (Fuchs 2011:380). Thus far in our historical criticism, we are able to establish only a broad upper-and-lower limit for the historical-political context of Psalm 83.

Through analysis of the development of the various forms of psalms as traced in the prophetic writings, Gunkel provides upper and lower limits to their composition: communal complaint songs (laments), developed through the mid-monarchic period through to their fuller and final form in the "late Judean monarchic period" (Gunkel 1998:324-325). Postexilic psalmody shows evidence of a focus on the communal sin and guilt of Israel[9] – both as form (confession) and as justification (punishment) – which are largely resisted, leading Gunkel (1998:325) to once again place the communal complaint songs squarely in the pre-exilic period.

According to Pleins (1994:34), the context for Psalm 83 is an Assyrian led alliance of nations seeking the downfall of Judah, however, Holladay (1993:33) considers the same evidence as indicative of an Assyrian threat to Northern Israel. Notwithstanding several likely hypotheses as to the date of composition of this psalm, Brueggemann & Bellinger (2014:360) note that the alternate reading of the enemy nations may also be allegorical, and a generalised list of the enemies of Ancient Isreal. Similarly, Longman (2011:340) considers the list of enemies to be traditional rather than exacting. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997:np) suggest that the events mediating the composition of psalm 83 are those recorded in 2 Chronicles 20:1:

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[9] Termed "legal piety" by Gunkel.

> After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites[10], came against Jehoshaphat for battle.

If this is indeed the case, then the psalmist is writing of events that occur during the reign of Jehoshaphat, circa 872-848 BCE (Ridley 2012: n. p.). Terrien (2003:595-596) suggests that the date of composition of this psalm is contemporaneous with Jeremiah, due to syntactical similarities[11], and prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 598 BCE. As will be seen in section 3.2.6, the act of imprecation against the enemies of Israel was contemporary with the political upheaval – as found in Amos' judgments against them (such as Edom). Although dating of Amos is varied, it is plausible that Amos wrote prior to the sixth century BCE, given the longstanding history of animosity and military clashes between Israel and Edom (Sparks 1998:170-171).

In the absence of any further certainty of the exact date of the political crisis, the present writer agrees with Tate (1990:345) that the historical context given by the mention of Assyria is to be taken as a *presupposed* time for the crisis, and that whilst the studies by Gunkel and others indicate a pre-exilic composition, a post-exilic composition cannot be definitively ruled out. The social context which is presented in psalm 83 is a threat of an advancing coalition of enemies, as has been noted in this section already.

3.2.3   Textual criticism

Textual criticism is concerned with the reliability of a text, and in the case of readable texts is significantly easier. Whilst variations may be found between some Hebrew manuscripts – which may date to the seventh century BCE resolution of errors and alterations were recorded in works such as the Tiqqune Sopherim (van der Kooij 2006:579-580). This discipline arose as sixteenth and seventeenth century scholars were exposed to alternate manuscripts than the Biblia Rabbinica which had been

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[10] Jamieson, Fausset & Brown (1997) write of the Meunites: "Supposed to be rather the name of a certain people called Mohammonim or Mehunim (2 Ch 26:7), who dwelt in Mount Seir—either a branch of the old Edomite race or a separate tribe who were settled there." [sic] The construction מֵהָעַמּוֹנִים is ambiguous and can also mean *from the Ammonites*.

[11] Terrien (2003:596) notes the following examples: Jeremiah 11:19 ("Against me they form plots … to make me disappear"), Jeremiah 16:18 ("Come! Let us plot against…") and Jeremiah 48:2 ("Come! Let us make … disappear"); along with the conspicuous absence of Egypt and Babylon from this psalm.

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assumed the only Masoretic text, and has intensified with the discovery of the Qumran scrolls in the mid-twentieth century (van der Kooij 2006:580).

Tanner (2001:5) advances the concept of "bricolage", here meaning that a text is a compilation of "pieces, echoes and allusions of other 'texts'", and is a phenomenon found both in biblical and other ancient texts. Direct use of another text through quotation is one method to establish intertextuality, however, in poetic literature, there is no clear indication of the inclusion of such excerpts in the text itself (Tanner 2001:6-7). Such inclusions have two contexts – that of the original text, and that of the *bricolage* text – and understanding the relationship between these texts may add another level of understanding (Tanner 2001:7). The second primary method of *bricolage* is the use of allusion: allusion proper is a deliberate reference made by the author with a reasonable expectation that the audience would understand it, given a historical or cultural homogeneity; secondary allusion is the inclusion of phrases or terms peculiar to the cultural/historical setting (Tanner 2001:7).

Within the Psalms, repetition of passages, as well as superscriptions have contributed to the collecting and categorisation of the psalms (Tanner 2001:12). In the composition of the Psalms, there was undoubtedly intertextual influence, as Tanner (2001:49) explains, the Psalms show relationship between the writers, their relationship on existing texts and the reader's conceptualisation of the content.

At its simplest, textual criticism requires two steps (van der Kooij 2006:584): collection and analysis of the data on a text's transmission; evaluation of data collected to establish a preferred, and arguably more authentic reading.

Despite differences in numbering, Psalm 83 is found in both the Masoretic Text (MT) and Septuagint (LXX), as well as in the Aleppo, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus Codices (Crenshaw 2001:2). For the purposes of this study, the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia 4th Edition, electronic version (WTT) is preferred.

3.2.4   Macrostructural analysis

In the first section of this chapter (3.1), it was noted that Hermann Gunkel pioneered the use of comparative literary forms to establish the *genres* of the Psalms. Literary

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and form analysis both depend on the basis of the bible as a collection of literature, and that the various forms impact on the interpretive schema employed (Jasper 1998:21). An awareness of the literary nature of biblical texts is evidenced from the authors themselves: various genres are identified within the texts themselves (*inter alia*, chronicle, song, gospel); the structuring of the accounts indicates familiarity with the rules of storytelling and plot development; clear evidence of the use of existing *genres* is also present (Ryken 1994:56).

Before commencing on the study of the form of Psalm 83 and other communal laments, it is fitting to consider the nature of lament in the Ancient Near East (ANE), where laments were integral to obtaining the intervention of a deity to counter the fear of "divine abandonment" (Löhnert 2011:402). The style of lament is found both as stand-alone laments and components of other literary works, and was an aspect of ANE culture from the twenty-fourth century BCE until c. 80 BCE, geographically dispersed over territory including Iraq, Syria and Turkey (Löhnert 2011:402). ANE deities were notoriously erratic and hence laments were a feature of ANE religion as a means to assuage the wrath or irritation of the deity (Löhnert 2011:403). Individual laments have a longstanding tradition within the ANE, however, it is notable that the communal lament emerged primarily in the first millennium BCE, as attested by its inclusion in calendars and summonses to lament (Löhnert 2011:405).

Formal analysis varies in terms of categorisation of the psalms:
- Hayes and Holladay (2007:107) outline three primary forms of psalms: hymns, laments and thanksgivings .
- Emanuel (2012:4) outlines five: two types each of laments (individual and communal) and hymns (royal psalms and hymns) and only a single thanksgiving genre.

Mowinckel considered Psalms 31, 35, 42 (43), 56, 59, 69, 109 and 142 to be communal laments, whilst Ferris (1992:14) has classified significantly more as either fully or partly communal laments: 31, 35, 42 – 44, 56, 59, 60, 69, 74, 77, 79, 80, 83, 85, 89, 94, 102, 109, 137 and 142. A particularly important observation of Ryken's (1994:56) for this study is that the psalmists wrote praise psalms in three parts and

lament psalms in five parts. The fivefold progression of a lament psalm includes an introduction, problem statement, petition, affirmation of faith and a vow (Crenshaw 2001:6). Faced with traumatic experiences, the communal lament may open in several ways (Pleins 1993:32-33):

1. A simple plea (Psalm 12:2, 83:2)
2. Rhetorical questions of God (Psalm 74:1)
3. Statements of present reality of dislocation (Psalm 137:1)
4. Restatements of the relationship of a covenant community with God (Ps. 44:2)
5. Individual appeals, on behalf of the community (Ps 123:1, 129:1)
6. Accusations against the wicked (Pss. 58:2, 129:1)
7. Restatement of a hope to come (Pss 85:2, 108:2).

These openings are not exclusive, and as Pleins (1993:32, 34) notes, psalm 83, whilst opening with a simple plea, adopts the posture of accusation of the enemy. A classic feature of communal laments is the appeal to Yahweh (Elohim) in the vocative voice within the opening lines, at the introduction of new paragraphs of the complaint and/or petition and in the conclusion, qualifiers which Psalm 83 meets in verses 2, 14, 17 and 19 respectively (Gunkel 1998:85).

Psalms 50 and 73-83 are attributed to Asaph, and are a thematic (if not sequential) unit (Crenshaw 2001:23). We should note, furthermore, that Psalm 73 commences the third book of the Psalms, and, in contrast to the davidic Psalms, contains the most community laments of the five books, expressing the paradox of the persecuted righteous and prospering wicked, one which is only resolved by God's revelation of the end of the wicked (Miller 2003:92). Crenshaw (2001:23) traces the thematic development of the Asaphite collection as follows:

> "The initial psalm asserts that the heavens proclaim divine justice for the most part, the other eleven psalms reflect on the accuracy of this claim in light of evidence to the contrary, particularly Jerusalem's ruined state and the prosperity of the wicked. They move from the promise of Yahweh's coming … and the justification of speech … through the announcement that the earth has been reduced to silence (76:9), to a plea for the fulfillment of the promise that God will not remain silent (83:2)."

Hence, the appeal in these psalms is raised to God, *Elohim*, a curious feature, given the absence of appeal to Yahweh, particularly as the cries for God's intervention and

"appeals to divine memory" are based on his covenant relationship with Israel (Crenshaw 2001:23-24). This collection of psalms also details the end of the temple cult (Psalm 74) with a possible establishing of the synagogue and prayer (praise) as the cultic expression of Israelite religion (Crenshaw 2001:25). Inasmuch as appeals are made to Divine Memory, the mortal reality of the people is also evidenced as their memory of God's previous goodness to them produces turmoil as they contemplate their surroundings (Crenshaw 2001:25). Yet, confidence in God is maintained throughout the collection, with the remembrance that God has delayed his action in the past, but is faithful to arise, and his character is appealed to as *El, Elohim, Yahweh* (YHWH is found in all but psalm 82), *El-yon*, Holy One of Israel, God of Jacob, and a significant shift from 'our God' (50:3) to 'my God' (83:14) (Crenshaw 2001:26).

In summary, the present writer finds that there is reasonable basis to assert that Psalm 83 is indeed a communal lament, in agreement with the analysis of Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:360). A caveat from Ferris (1992:7), however is warranted, who warns that form criticism may in fact impose a "monolithic conception of genre and assumed … homogeneity of the typical factors". The existence of various forms (however defined) similarly shows that the psalms are a combination of liturgical texts (Hayes & Holladay 2007:107), and hence, a form classification must be open to investigation, mutation and "even elimination", if we are to allow the text to speak for itself (Ferris 1992:7).

3.2.5   Microstructural analysis

Detailed analysis will follow the strophic outline of Terrien (2003), as noted in section 3.2.1 (structural analysis).

<u>Introduction</u>

[1] A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.   שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְאָסָף [1]

The ascription of the psalm to Asaph, may refer to Asaph, found in the accounts of the Davidic monarchy, or alternately, the sons of Asaph, or even a nod to the style of Asaphite psalms, utilising their structure and style (Nasuti 1983:52). Martin Buss

considered the traditions contained in several psalms and their similarity to Isaiah and Deuteronomy as indicative of Northern Israel origin and a proto-deuteronomic levitical-tradition, namely: 77, 78, 80 and 81 (Nasuti 1983:70). Some consider the ascription "of Asaph" to be of Northern Israelite dialect (Holladay 1993:32). In contrast, Karl-Johan Illman considers the presence of deuteronomic material to be less significant than Buss does and draws attention to the "explicit and implicit connections to Israel", and rather advises attention be focussed on the known usage of the psalms in the Jerusalem temple [cult] (Nasuti 1983:91-93).

I   The Name of Israel and the Name of Yahweh (vv. 2-5)

² O God, do not keep silence;

Do not hold your peace or be still, O God!

<div dir="rtl">

²אֱלֹהִים אַל־דֳּמִי־לָךְ

אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ וְאַל־תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל:
</div>

Three distinct words are used to describe the plea that God should not be unmoved by the plight of his people: דֳּמִי, תֶּחֱרַשׁ and תִּשְׁקֹט. דֳּמִי has meanings of "cessation, quiet, rest" (Brown, Driver & Briggs (BDB) 2000:n.p.), and carries the idea of muteness, defined as "a refusal to speak when expected" in the Bible Sense Lexicon (Barry, J D *et al* 2015:n.p.). תֶּחֱרַשׁ is primarily associated with "deaf" (Brown et al 2000:n.p.; Gesenius & Tregelles 2003:n.p.), or to choose to be silent (Barry, J D *et al* 2015:nn). תִּשְׁקֹט is more than simply being at rest, as Lookadoo (2014:n.p.) explains: it is associated with warfare in Judges 3:11, 18:17 and Ezekiel 38:11. Hence we see in verse 2 a cry from the psalmist that God would no longer be absent in his response, but would choose to arise to the aid of his people and actively deal with the enemies of Judah. We should also note the use of an *inclusio* in this verse: it opens and closes with God's name (אֱלֹהִים and אֵל respectively).

³ For behold, your enemies make an uproar;

Those who hate you have raised their heads.

<div dir="rtl">

³כִּי־הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יֶהֱמָיוּן

וּמְשַׂנְאֶיךָ נָשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ:
</div>

The addition of a paragogic nun in the construction יֶהֱמָיוּן brings to our attention that the noise that the enemy make is forceful, and justifies the BDB (2000:n.p.) rendering of "growl". A curious lack of agreement is found in the second part of verse 3, namely that the participle and verb (וּמְשַׂנְאֶיךָ נָשְׂאוּ, "the ones who hate you have

raised") are both masculine plural forms, but the object (רֹאשׁ, "head") is singular. Furthermore whilst רְאֹשׁ is readily associated with "head", there is deuteronomic use of רְאֹשׁ during the conquest to refer to the leaders of Israel (Deut 5:23, 33:5 and Joshua 19:51), although is it conjecture to suggest the intentional connection of the psalmist to this usage.

English	Hebrew
[4] They lay crafty plans against your people;	⁴עַל־עַמְּךָ יַעֲרִימוּ סוֹד
they consult together against your treasured ones.	וְיִתְיָעֲצוּ עַל־צְפוּנֶיךָ׃
[5] They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation;	⁵אָמְרוּ לְכוּ וְנַכְחִידֵם מִגּוֹי
let the name of Israel be remembered no more!"	וְלֹא־יִזָּכֵר שֵׁם־יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד׃

The psalmist is clear that the people of Israel are God's people (עַמְּךָ, "your people") – and this is the basis of the plea for assistance – that God should take an interest in the welfare of those who are his. Also, note that whilst in verse 3, the enmity is directed towards God, the transition to the hate of his people implies that they are one-and-the same. יַעֲרִימוּ is in the Hiphil stem, and is therefore to be interpreted in the causative sense, rendering "to be crafty" as "they are being crafty". The ESV loses some of the nuance of v. 4, as the word סוֹד, meaning a gathering or council (BDB 2000:n.p.) is not reflected. Hence a preferable rendering could be "they conspire" as it carries the sense of group action, and should rightly be associated with יַעֲרִימוּ and not וְיִתְיָעֲצוּ due to the 'atnāḥ. In their conspiring, they also "consult together" against "the ones who shelter in you" – a more literal rendering of צְפוּנֶיךָ.

In verse 5 we encounter the first imperative of the psalm, לְכוּ, found in the quoted words from the enemy, who is summoning kinsfolk to bring about the destruction of Israel.

II   The History of Enmity against Israel (vv. 6-9)

English	Hebrew
[6] For they conspire with one accord;	⁶כִּי נוֹעֲצוּ לֵב יַחְדָּו
against you they make a covenant-	עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ׃

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this verse is the construction בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ, literally, "to cut (a) covenant". "To cut" is a clear reference to the ancient practice of cutting up animals to seal a covenant (Barry, J D *et al* 2015:n.p.) – employing the imagery of how the enemies cut a covenant amongst themselves akin to how God cut a covenant with Israel.

[7] The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,	אָהֳלֵי אֱדוֹם וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִים [7]
Moab and the Hagrites,	
[8] Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,	מוֹאָב וְהַגְרִים:
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;	גְּבָל וְעַמּוֹן וַעֲמָלֵק [8]
	פְּלֶשֶׁת עִם־יֹשְׁבֵי צוֹר׃עַל־עַמְּךָ

With verses 7 through to 9, we are presented with the makings of a sizable threat, with a list of 10 nation-states that are coming against Israel. Firstly, we note that Edom and Moab are first within their clauses, not surprising as both hostile to the Israelites during the exodus and conquest periods of history (Moore & Kelle 2011:82). In addition, they are amongst nations that Israel dominated over in the ninth century BCE (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:268; Moore & Kelle 2011:316). As David expanded the Israel's territories, *politique practique* allowed the conquest of the lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon, developing the confederacy into a nation-state (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:277).

Edom, אֱדוֹם, was a nation descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob (Israel) (Gn 25:30, 36:1, 8, 43; Dearman 2007:190; Douglas & Tenney 2011:386; MacDonald 1979:18; Moore & Kelle 2011:117), and were thus party to the curse of Esau[12] given after his blessing had been stolen by Jacob (Gn 27:1-40). Scripturally, Edom is characterised as resistant to God, and shows "willfulness (*zādôn*, Jer 49:16; Obad 3) [sic]" in doing so (Goldingay 2006:789). Edom specialised in trade, and was dominant on trade routes stretching from India and Arabia to the Mediterranean and Egypt (MacDonald 1979:20). The religion of the Edomites was focussed on fertility gods and goddesses, and their principal deities were Qauš[13] and Eloah (the singular of Elohim) (MacDonald 1979:20).

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[12] "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck." (Gn 27:39-40).

[13] Crouch (2014:42) also notes alternate spelling, Qôs.

During the conquest of Canaan, it was the King of Edom who prevented the Israelites from a shorter crossing through Edom (Douglas & Tenney 2011:387; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:219; MacDonald 1979:19). Longstanding rivalries between Israel and Edom saw territories switching hands several times (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:291, 355, 359; MacDonald 1979:19-20). After the fall of Jerusalem, Edom would opportunistically seize territories from Judah (Dearman 2007:190), giving rise to Obadiah's prophecy of "vindictive hatred, anticipating Yahweh's judgment on the traditional enemy of his people" (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:409; Ob 1:9-10).

The Ishmaelites (וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִים) were descended from Ishmael, the son of Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah's) maidservant Hagar – a culturally innocuous occurrence in ancient Mesopotamia, but an event with dire implications (Baur & Harrison 1979:905-906; Douglas & Tenney 2011:662-663; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:139, 147; Knauf 2008:93). Even though Abraham circumcised Ishmael, it remained clear that he was not the child of the covenant (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:147). Association of the Ishmaelites with the Midianites is found in Genesis 37:28, 36 and Judges 8:24 (Douglas & Tenney 2011:663-664; Porter 1979:906). By the eighth century BCE, the various desert tribes of the Ishmaelites had a confederacy extending across Northern Arabia and held sway over the Wadi Sirhan, the territory connecting Central Arabia and the Ammonite lands (Liverani 2005:79).

Descended from מוֹאָב (Moab), the son of Lot, the Moabites were related to the Israelites (Dearman 2009a:118; Douglas & Tenney 2011:964; Kautz 1979:389). As an early Transjordanian people they were advanced agriculturists and settlements often housed "craftsmen … metallurgists", along with evidence of religious life (Kautz 1979:390). Moab excelled in building (Dearman 2009b:114; Moore & Kelle 2011:290), and had control of profitable trade routes (Kautz 1979:394). Like the Edomites, the Moabites were also encountered in the journey into Canaan, where the Israelites traversed Moab's eastern boundary to reach the river Arnon (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:219; Kautz 1979:392). Of particular interest is the account of the attempts by Balak, King of Moab, to incite curses upon the Israelites, through Balaam (Nm 23-24; Douglas & Tenney 2011:964; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:220). By contrast, Balaam, on Yahweh's instruction is only able to pronounce blessing at each occasion he is given (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:220). Under David, particularly harsh military defeats were dealt to Moab (Kautz 1979:393),

however they were only significantly subdued by the Assyrians[14] and destroyed by the Babylonians (Dearman 2009a:124; Kautz 1979:394).

The Hagrites (וְהַגְרִים) were a Transjordanian people of Arab descent who warred against the Israelite tribe of Reuben, and were later absorbed into the tribe of Reuben (1 Chr. 5:10, 19-22), but remained a distinct people (1 Chr. 27:30; Cheney 2007:718; Douglas & Tenney 2011:563; Harrison 1979:596). Their genealogy may be tied to Hagar, but distinct from Ishmael's lineage (Segal 2013:393).

[8] Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,	גְּבָל וְעַמּוֹן וַעֲמָלֵק [8]
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;	פְּלֶשֶׁת עִם־יֹשְׁבֵי צוֹר:

Around the term Gebal (גְּבָל) there is ambiguity, with two possible identifications:
- A Phoenician city called *Byblos* in Greek (Frolov 2007:529; Vos 1979:420)
- A Transjordan town located to the South-East of the Dead Sea (Frolov 2007:529; Douglas & Tenney 2011:509)

Gebal (*Byblos* in Greek) was a city of Phoenicia in antiquity, which traded largely with Egypt, and although the territory of the Gebalites was granted to Israel in Joshua 13:5), it was never occupied by the Israelites (Vos 1979:420). Under Hyskos rule, the population grew swiftly, and military architecture abounded, and following several brief periods of Egyptian rule between 1600 and 1100BCE, Phoenicia became independent, eventually being overshadowed by Tyre (Vos 1979:421). Whilst the LXX does not associate Gebal with Byblos, the reference to "Philistia and Tyre" may allow for the identification of Gebal with Byblos (Frolov 2007:529-530). However, Vos (1979:421) asserts that it is the second identification of Gebal that is intended in Psalm 83:7.

The Ammonites were descended from Ammon (וְעַמּוֹן), the son of Lot, and so shared genealogy with the Israelites (Dearman 2006b:131; Douglas & Tenney 2011:59; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:512; Moore & Kelle 2011:117; Thompson 1979b:111). On the basis of this link, the Israelites were to be kind towards the Ammonites, however this was not reciprocated, and the Ammonites conspired with the Moabites during both the reigns of Balak and Eglon (Thompson 1979b:111). Saul was to launch his first military battle against the Ammonites following their siege of

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[14] Shalmeneser of Assyria (726-722BCE) or Sargon (721-705BCE) (Douglas & Tenney, 2011).

an Israelite town (Jabesh-Gilead) whereupon they demanded a severe penalty for peace[15] (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:266; Moore & Kelle 2011:222; Thompson 1979b:111). However, the Ammonites were not subdued, and were at times friendly with Israel, and others, hostile (2 Sm 2:10, 10, 12:26-31, 11:1, 5, 7, 33; Douglas & Tenney 2011:60; Thompson 1979b:111). The close proximity of the tribal land of Benjamin to the Ammonites and Philistines make it plausible that they had the frequent skirmishes as recorded in the Bible (Moore & Kelle 2011:231). During the Assyrian empire, the Ammonites remained hostile to Israel, gained Assyrian peace through tribute, and attempted to prevent rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls (Thompson 1979b:112). The prophets of Israel held particular scorn for the Ammonites (Jer 49:1-6, Ezek 21:20, 25:1-7; Amos 1:13-15; Zeph 2:8-11), who were characterised as "fierce … and rebellious" (Douglas & Tenney 2011:60) and endured until the second century BCE (Thompson 1979b:112). Ammonite deities included Molech, Chemosh (1 Ki 11: 7, 33; Thompson 1979b:111), Milcom and El (Dearman 2006b:132-133).

The Amalekites were descended from Amalek (וַעֲמָלֵק), who was Eliphaz's son, and thus Esau's grandson, and were dispersed in the Negeb/Sinai desserts[16] (Gn 36:12,16; Dearman 2006a:120; Douglas & Tenney 2011:54; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:512; Thompson 1979a:104). Centred around Kadesh, the Amalekites were similarly a hostile nation towards Israel, and notably, it was Saul's disobedience in battle against them that was part of his undoing (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:268; Thompson 1979a:104; 1 Sm 15:22-23). We should note that in the aforementioned event, it was Samuel who then dismembered Agog, the King of the Amalekites (Dearman 2006a:121; Thompson 1979a:104). As with many of the other nations in the Transjordan region, it is possible that the Amalekites were incorporated – at least in part – in early Israelite community, although there is clear evidence of animosity and violence in their engagements with Israel (Moore & Kelle 2011:125,222). The Amalekites, whilst still a threat, declined in power, and in Hezekiah's reign they were defeated and lost their heartland of Mount Seir (Thompson 1979a:104). Douglas and Tenney (2011:55) characterise the Amalekites as a warring people who acted either alone or in confederation with other states, and were ruthless towards both people and crops.

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[15] The Ammonites demanded the right eye of each of the inhabitants of the town as terms of surrender.
[16] Thompson (1979a:104) separates the Amalekites descended from Amalek from another group also called Amalekites mentioned in the Bible, but suggests that the latter may have been subsumed into the former.

During the Early Iron Age, Philistia[17] (פְּלֶשֶׁת) was a dominant power along the coastal regions, and were among the 'sea peoples' the Egyptians wrote of (Moore & Kelle 2011:201-202). Influenced by, and possibly derived from, Mycenaean culture, the Philistines occupied territory on the Eastern Mediterranean that had been under Egyptian control, and were city builders (Moore & Kelle 2011:202). Five city-states formed the confederation that is known as Philistia (Ehrlich 2009:507; Liverani 2005:70; Magness 2012:25): Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza. Philistia is strictly speaking, the southern coastal plain, south of the plain of Sharon, and was, in large part, arable land (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:59). The Philistines were a source of discomfort for the Israelites during the periods of the Judges and early monarchy, but were increasingly culturally homogenous with the other peoples in the area by the sixth century BCE (Moore & Kelle 2011:202). Before his ascension to the throne, David was, for a period, allied with both Judah and the Philistines, although it was the final battle of Saul that both opened the path for David and gave the Philistines territory in Western Canaan (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:272-273).

The inhabitants of Tyre (עַם־יֹשְׁבֵי צוֹר) were within a well-fortified and prosperous city built on a rocky island, whose territory included mainland settlements (Barnes 2009:693; Cochrane 1979:932-933; Douglas & Tenney 2011:1492). Tyre was one of the foremost Phoenician cities, and along with other Canaanite nations were responsible for the basis of the Western alphabet (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:308; Magness 2012:25; Maisels 1999:2). The Phoenicians were based on the North-eastern Mediterranean coast, and their prominence in sea-trade was well known (Crouch 2014:26; Douglas & Tenney 2011:1492; Fagan 2007:444; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:56-57; Liverani 1979:854, 856; Liverani 2005:71). Just as Philistia was a confederation of city-states, Phoenicia was likewise a confederation, with Tyre and Sidon foremost (Lehmann 2001:66, 94; Liverani 1979:854).

Geographically, Phoenicia was accessible to the Northern tribes, and in later history, a treaty between Phoenicia and Omri's Israel would provide the Northern Kingdom with a strong ally, and also the infamous wife of Ahab, Jezebel, the princess of Tyre (Doumet-Serhal 2009:518; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:308; Magness 2012:28). Lucrative trade with the Phoenicians increased during the ninth century BCE (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:308; Moore & Kelle 2011:295). During the Assyrian response to a rebellion by Judah, Tyre fell but was not destroyed (Crouch 2014:27;

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[17] Lehmann (2001:66) cautions that although ethnic identity distinguished the various groups of Canaanite peoples, the Ancient Near East was likely a constellation of "hybrid cultures"; distinctiveness arises through studies of biblical, historical, archaeological and corollary accounts.

Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996: 362, 465). Unlike much of mainland Phoenicia, Tyre remained independent during Assyrian expansion (Douglas & Tenney 2011:1493; Lipschitz 2005:7; Liverani 1979:859), but at great cost, and at the end of the Assyrian empire, lost many peoples to colonies established in the Mediterranean such as Carthage (Cochrane 1979:934).

| [9] Asshur also has joined them; | גַּם־אֲשּׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם [9] |
| they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. Selah | הָיוּ זְרוֹעַ לִבְנֵי־לוֹט סֶלָה: |

Asshur[18] (אֲשּׁוּר) was the eponymous capital of Assyria, founded by Shem's son Asshur (Gen 10:11, 22; 1 Chronicles 1:17; Douglas & Tenney 2011:132; Southard 2006:310). In war, the Assyrians were brutal, and Assyrian inscriptions detail a policy of destruction of cities, villages and agricultural land, along with pillaging of livestock, crops and deportation of survivors (Liverani 2005:149). Such was the ferocity of the Assyrians that Fuchs (2011:396) comments that the age-old practice of severing and parading heads of enemies was "a gruesome but yet comparatively harmless habit" (2011:396). More horrendous treatments of captives involved disfigurement (such as cutting off "noses, lips, ears, hands and feet … when still alive"), public humiliation not limited to impaling or being skinned[19] (Fuchs 2011:396, 398). Their brutality and their technological advances (and superiority) over Israel may be a factor in their placement last on this list of enemies, as a nation that strikes the greatest fear of all those in the coalition.

As a nation, the Assyrians were significant enemies of Israel and Judah, and were an advanced people, and rivalled Babylonia's technology in the following fields:
> "… development and applications of the wheel, glass-making, dyeing, refining … tools and crafts. Mathematics, medicine, tanning, and chemical technology … the development of weaponry, chariotry, siege engines, road-building … Royal botanical and zoological gardens … elaborate irrigation systems … barrage and dam control of the rivers … new techniques of casting bronze" (Wiseman 1979:332, 340-341).

During the time of the Divided Kingdom, both Israel and Judah were morally corrupt, such that it would be difficult to establish which was worse off, however, in areas of

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[18] Also spelt Ashur.
[19] Fuchs (2011:398) explains that skins of captives would be displayed on city walls, and that these torturous methods were not only used on enemies but also to quiet dissent within the empire

commerce, military and culture, Israel was far more advanced than Judah (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:303). Imminent threats from Syria prompted an alliance with Judah, and the defeated Syrians were then enjoined in the resistance to Assyrian aspirations of empire under Asshurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:310-311). The allegiance of twelve kings in the Syrian-Palestinian territory prevented the invasion by Assyria in the sixth year of Ahab's reign, despite a major loss in the battle of Qarqar (Dietrich 2007:118; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:311; Thompson 1979b:111).

Initially, Assyrian expansion threatened the Northern Kingdom, which served as a buffer for Judah (Crouch 2014:9); however, following a period of prosperity, the late eighth century saw the Assyrian assimilation of many states west of Israel, and culminating in the fall of Israel in 722BC (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:357-358; Lipschits 2005:4; Roberts 2006:327), and precipitated a large influx into Judah (Finkelstein 2005:209; Moore & Kelle 2011:300). Before Samaria's fall, however, Ahaz appealed to Assyria to quell skirmishes that threatened Judah, and sent a large tributary to secure Assyrian aid, but, in the process making Judah a vassal state of Assyria (Crouch 2014:9; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:358-359; King & Stager 2001:246; Liverani 2005:147-148).

Apostasy reached a zenith in Judah in the period following the entreaty to Assyria, as the Assyrian gods were both recognised and worshiped in Judah (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:359; Liverani 2005:151). From this point on, several attempts to revolt were entertained[20] however vassal-ship would define much of the remaining pre-exilic history of Judah (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:362-363, 381, 383; Moore & Kelle 2011:317-320). Following the death of Asshurbanipal, Assyrian dominance in the region waned, and Judah gained *de facto* independence; a Medo-Babylonian coalition brought the fall of Nineveh and the collapse of the Assyrian empire in 612 BCE (Fagan 2007:369; Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:383-384; Liverani 2005:166; Roberts 2006:331).

Most of these nations are related (at least in biblical thinking) to the people of Israel, and hence the label "the strong arm of the sons of Lot" (זְרוֹעַ לִבְנֵי־לוֹט) is appropriate. Although Ammon and Moab could only claim to be the literal sons of Lot (Moore & Kelle 2011:117) the inclusion of other peoples indicates a metaphorical inclusion into

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[20] Flanders, Crapps & Smith (ibid.) explain that the events typically preceding revolts would be: political turmoil elsewhere in the Assyrian empire; a change of ruler in Assyria, which produced uncertainty in the empire.

one grouping. Ammon and Moab, in terms of territorial claims were equivalent to those of davidic Israel (Liverani 2005:78).

Whilst debate continues as to the reliability of the biblical accounts of the conquest of Canaan and the various nations in the land, ranging from completely fictitious to reliable, but biased (Bienowski 2009:8; Magness 2012:26-28), this is in part insignificant to the current study. The reality of Psalm 83 is that there was a perceived threat from a coalition of surrounding nations, and a shared history demanded that Yahweh intervene (Liverani 2005:180). It is also noteworthy that military victories over Israel were recorded as victories over "Yahweh and his people" in steles from Moab and Damascus[21] (King & Stager 2001:224), reflecting the ancient belief that to defeat a people would be to defeat their god.

III   Those who seek the pastures of God (vv. 10-13)

Verses 10-12 present a list of past enemies that God dwelt decisively, and is included possible to rouse God to act again, as well as to establish the basis for the hope of the psalmist.

Midian (מִדְיָן) features in the conquest history of Israel, and despite an early victory over the five kings of Midian (Num. 31:8), they were subjected as divine punishment in Judges 6, the principle event in the call of Gideon as a judge of Israel. Here, however, the psalmist makes an interesting diversion to a pre-Gideonite period, that of Deborah and Balak and their victory over Sisera (כְּסִיסְרָא) along with the subsequent Israelite defeat of Jabin (כְיָבִין), king of Canaan (Jdg. 4-5). The psalmist also relates what is at least legend, namely the lack of burial for the dead kings Sisera and Jabin. The key word in the first 'list' is דֹּמֶן (dung) and is a term that relates to a select number of usages, 6 in total, 5 excluding Psalm 83. To be left to become dung is a fate pronounced over Jezebel (2 Kings 9:37), and a curse pronounced over apostate Judah[22]. Given the detailed instruction for the burial of patriarchs such as Joseph, one can only imagine the horror of such a lack of a respectable burial.

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[21] The Mesha Stela (Dhiban) attributes the Moabite king, Mesha's victory to Chemosh and the Tel Dan Stela attributes the Damascene victory of Hazael to Hadad.

[22] The prophecies of Jeremiah refer:

> 8:1-2: [1] At that time, declares the LORD, the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs. [2] And they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and served, which they have gone after, and which they have sought and worshiped.
> 19:22: Speak: "Thus declares the LORD, 'The dead bodies of men shall fall like dung upon the open field, like sheaves after the reaper, and none shall gather them.' "

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Continuing with the victories of the conquest period, the psalmist refers to the defeat of Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna in Judges 7-8, under the leadership of Gideon. נִירֲשָׁה, "let us take possession" brings to mind the possession of Canaan (in verb forms built on ירשׁ):

- God promises it as a possession to the descendants of Abraham/Israel: Genesis 15:7-8, 22:17, 28:4, Leviticus 20:24; Deuteronomy 1:39
- The Israelites actually take possession: Numbers 21
- The Israelites are ordered to dispossess the nations in Canaan: Numbers 33; Deuteronomy 1:8, 21
- Warnings against disobedience and subsequent dispossession: Exodus 34:24; Numbers 14:12

Indeed, throughout the remainder of the pre-monarchical conquest, the usage of ירשׁ is seemingly exclusive to the taking of the land of Canaan and driving out the nations that were there. Hence the psalmist is once again employing a word that to Israelite consciousness would pique their interest (allusion), and remind them of God's promise to give them Canaan as an inheritance (possession). However, in this context, the possessing is done by an enemy power, who, as we have seen in this psalm already, sets itself against God, his people, and here, his possession – the pastures of God (נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים).

IV   Death to them all! (vv. 14-17)

In this strophe, we now move from a focus on the enemy powers past and present, and the psalmist's appeal that God would bring victory to the present as he has in the past through powerful imagery.

16:4: They shall die of deadly diseases. They shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. They shall perish by the sword and by famine, and their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth.

25:33: "And those pierced by the LORD on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground.

¹⁴ O my God, make them like whirling dust,

like chaff before the wind.
¹⁵ As fire consumes the forest,

as the flame sets the mountains ablaze,
¹⁶ So may you pursue them with your tempest

and terrify them with your hurricane!

אֱלֹהַי שִׁיתֵמוֹ כַגַּלְגַּל ¹⁴

כְּקַשׁ לִפְנֵי־רוּחַ

כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר־יָעַר ¹⁵

וּכְלֶהָבָה תְּלַהֵט הָרִים׃

כֵּן תִּרְדְּפֵם בְּסַעֲרֶךָ ¹⁶

וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תְבַהֲלֵם׃

Opening this part of the lament, the psalmist appeals to "my God" (אֱלֹהַי), calling on the name אלהים. Perhaps in anticipation of declaring that God is the Most High, and surely over creation, the psalmist now employs imagery of natural disaster. Firstly is that of great wind, a related phenomenon that is found at the end of verse 16 again. The word כַגַּלְגַּל has meanings related both to whirlwind and straw/chaff (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003:n.p.), and the parallelism of repetition using כְּקַשׁ, "chaff" is undoubtedly intentional. The second natural disaster is that of a wild and uncontained fire (vv. 15-16), and is surely drawn from the experience of the psalmist from observing such phenomena. Sheer vivid descriptions provide rich imagery using metaphor. Finally, a reversion to a natural disaster related to wind is brought again, and may not necessarily be an exclusive event, given that fires spread with great winds. In the psalmist's plea, it is not enough to dispossess the enemy, but a plea is also raised that God would "pursue … and terrify them" (תִּרְדְּפֵם and תְבַהֲלֵם). It is not unlikely that the psalmist here wishes that the enemies would experience not only the wrath of God, but also the experience of the Israelites who were being pursued and terrified.

¹⁷ Fill their faces with shame,

that they may seek your name, O Lord.

מַלֵּא פְנֵיהֶם קָלוֹן ¹⁷

וִיבַקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה׃

However, the psalmist does not leave his appeal with the selfish concern of a people under siege, but speaks of the redemptive hope in divine vindication – that those who formerly conspired and plotted, would be ruined and brought to the end of their pride (and possibly their dependence on Canaanite gods, and seek God by his holy and unspeakable name – YHWH.

<u>Envoi: Shame and disgrace over against Yahweh's name (vv. 18-19)</u>

¹⁸ Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever;

let them perish in disgrace,

¹⁹ That they may know that you alone,

whose name is the Lord,

are the Most High over all the earth.

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יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ עֲדֵי־עַד ¹⁸

וְיַחְפְּרוּ וְיֹאבֵדוּ׃

וְיֵדְעוּ ¹⁹

כִּי־אַתָּה שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה לְבַדֶּךָ

עֶלְיוֹן עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃

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Once again, despite a strong plea for the destruction of the enemy's strength, the psalmist expresses hope that the oppressors would recognise the might of God, here expressed in two titles within the same verse: YHWH (יְהוָה) and *El-yon* (Most High over all the earth, עֶלְיוֹן עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ).

3.2.6   Tradition criticism

Tradition criticism *(Traditionsgeschichte)*, the study of the tradition that developed or employed a text, and must avoid imposing untested putative scenarios on a text as well as unproductive over-extraction of a text from its context (Nasuti 1983:3, 37).

Mowinckel argues for the cultic use of the communal laments based on several factors, most prominently the use of the first-person plural pronoun (we) as found in Psalms 12, 14, 44, 58, 60, 74, 80, 83, 144 and Lamentations 5 (1962a:194). The progression from the earlier first-person singular lament to the plural lament is indicative of a development from Assyrio-Babylonian laments, which depended on the monarch as the main protagonist in rousing a deity to the defence of the people in favour of the communal religion of Israel (Mowinckel 1962a:194). From the outset, the communal laments appeal to the God of Israel, in the vocative, as seen in section 3.2.4, and is often followed by an appeal for help/deliverance (Mowinckel 1962a:195-196).

Outside of the Psalms, there is evidence of cultic use of imprecation in Amos, where judgements were extended towards the nations that opposed Israel: Syria, Philistia,

Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon and Moab[23] (Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1996:344). The exclusion of certain nations from identification with Israelite ethnicity has a long history in ancient Israel, and notably, the following nations were explicitly excluded, for varying generations: Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and Egyptians (Deut 23:1-8; Goldingay 2009:510). As concerns the psalms, two opposite cultic elements stand out, namely the festivals and "days of humiliation and prayer"[24], to which the laments belong (Ferris 1992:5). Obvious markers of communal despair such as fasting from food and beverages, withdrawal from normal, everyday work, and the wearing of sackcloth, shaving of heads along with rites of purification and anointing were amongst the prescribed activities for fast-days (Mowinckel 1962a:193).

3.2.7 Redaction criticism

In literary criticism, it is a widely-accepted presupposition that the Bible in its current form is the result of editing/redaction, although it is not unchallenged (van Seters 2006:1-2). Notwithstanding objections, the reality of a lengthy composition[25] does allow for the possibility of redaction.

Standard twentieth century *Psalter* exegesis considered the ascriptions in the psalms a product of earlier, preexilic works that were collated and hence evidence of an earlier cultic tradition, or alternatively, the ascriptions were dismissed as postexilic (Wenham 2012:32,35). Just more than three quarters of the Psalms contain superscriptions, notably attributing authorship, however, these were not original, and may bear testimony to redaction (Tanner 2001:57). Differences are found when one compares the LXX, MT, Targum and Peshitta, and Tanner (2001:57) suggests that these may have come about through the collating of the Psalms.

Although of less interest to form-criticism, Naruti emphasises that in the consideration of the Book of Psalms, "the sequence … is of crucial importance for the meaning of the larger whole" (2005:312). Taken as a whole the Book of Psalms displays several progressions:

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[23] Note that Syria is the *outlier* in this set when compared with Psalm 83.
[24] Synonymous with Gunkel's proposition of the communal fast mentioned in section 3.2.2.
[25] As was seen in section 3.2.2, the communal complaint songs show development over the mid- to late monarchic period.

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> "… the Psalter begins with a torah psalm and ends with a number of psalms of praise … the first part of the Psalter contains a sizable concentration of lament psalms, while the latter part contains a similar concentration of psalms of praise. Finally … a shift over the course of the Psalter from individual to communal psalms" (Nasuti 2005:321-322).

The division of the Psalms into five books[26] may be considered a later redaction, or collecting and reordering of the psalms, which, although useful for the redactor(s), does present problems in establishing earlier collections (Pleins 1993:2). There seems to be little in terms of organising principle, as the books are not composed by form, author[27] or length of composition (Gunkel 1998:334). This is not to say that there exists no rhyme or reason for the current arrangement of the psalms, and indeed on closer examination patterns on a micro-level can be discerned where works were arranged on the basis of terminology, thematic development or author (Gunkel 1998:334-335).

Ancient witnesses to the availability of Greek translations and familiarity with the *ketūbîm* present a lower limit for the redaction of the psalms circa 200 BCE, and the inclusion of doxologies at the end of the books as a function of postexilic worship practices presents an upper limit of 400 – 350 BCE (Gunkel 1998:336-338). As concerns the Asaphite and Korahite psalms, the historical pre-eminence of the Asaphites, when placed alongside the equal footing given to the two groups in the psalms seems to indicate further redaction of the Korahite psalms, possibly as late as 300 BCE (Gunkel 1998:338-339).

The Elohistic *Psalter* (Psalms 42-83) are a definable unit, bearing evidence of redaction and preference for the preferred name Elohim, absent outside of this collection (Gunkel 1998:343). The later Davidic Psalms (51-72) are cushioned by the Koraite (42-49) and Asaphite (73-83) psalms, showing at least three collections, unified by the use of Elohim (Pleins 1993:2). Asaphite Psalms do not clearly show a method of organisation, as attributed by the possible transposition of Psalm 50, however the source of the order in the second collection (73-83) is not discernable

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[26] Book I consists of Psalms 1-41; Book II, of Psalms 42-72; Book III of Psalms 72-89; Book IV of Psalms 90 – 106; Book V, the remaining Psalms (107 – 150) (Pleins 1993:2).
[27] Davidic psalms are found throughout the collection, interspersed by Asaphite, Korahite, Solomonic and unattributed psalms in various degrees of collection (Gunkel 1998:334).

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(Gunkel 1998:344). The use of the Korahite and Asaphite psalms were almost undoubtedly cultic, with few exceptions, particularly evidenced by the presence of allusions to temple worship and/or musicality (Gunkel 1998:344). Whatever the cause was, the composition of the Elohistic *Psalter* reflects the preference for the name of Elohim over Yahweh within the worship of Israel (Gunkel 1998:345).

The following table adapted from Gunkel (1998:348) presents an overview of the transposition and redaction of the psalms:

Table 4: Transposition and redaction of the *Psalter* according to Gunkel

Pss 3-41	Pss 42-49 With additions of: 84-85, 87-88	Pss 51-72	Pss 50, 73-83	Pss 120-134	Individual Psalms
David I	**Korahite**	**David 2**	**Asaph**	**ma'ălôt songs**	**Individual Psalms**
↓	**Elohistic Psalter**			↓	↓
Collection of Pss 3-89				↓	↓
Psalter along with Transpositions					

Overall, the arrangement of the Psalms shows a progression from lament to a second half where praise dominates (Pleins 1993:3).

3.2.8   Synthesis

Psalm 83 demonstrates a use of curse formula, in keeping with the communal lament form, which typically includes "prayers for revenge and punishment of the enemies" (Mowinckel 1962b:51). The form of Psalm 83 fits that of a communal lament (complaint song), and throughout the psalmist maintains a posture of petition before God – calling on him to defend the dignity of his people and name(s). The relatedness of the nations mentioned in the first list is poignant to this study, as there is a rich heritage of shared ancestry and cultures in Africa – and Southern Africa in

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particular. The present writer finds that there is indeed spiritual benefit in this psalm, in agreement with many of the theorists surveyed.

In addition, whilst the strong language of the laments may be disturbing to the modern reader, Pleins (1993:43) reminds us that military conquests and victories were far more demanding and taxing than a simple reading of history suggests – "dead bodies, severed families, and fallen city walls" were the reality of the oppressed and dislocated peoples. Cultural practices throughout the Assyrian and Babylonian epochs condoned horrific acts in the names of deities, and as such, conquering kings were "entitled to … unrestrained brutality" (Fuchs 2011:396). However, we must also note that the psalms do not attempt to provide all-satisfying answers to the questions they pose (Pleins 1993:43), and we should caution against going beyond their limits in our interpretation.

3.2.9   Hermeneutical reflection

Curses were a cultic practice in the ancient world, and the specificity of Psalm 83 is reminiscent of these formulae in the ancient world (Mowinckel 1962b:63). However, modern societies are by-and-large removed from these cultic practices, and may find them disturbing. Hence, anticipating the objections that may be raised against such practices, attention is drawn to the importance of Yahweh's power in the sacramental aspect of cursing: just as it is his power that makes a blessing effective, it is also his power that is employed to bring destruction against the unrighteous and the enemies of the righteous (Mowinckel 1962b:49). Faithful exegesis of the imprecatory psalms and community laments requires integration of civil religion's affirmations of God's power and presence with the realty and "politics of suffering" (Pleins 1993:42).

Kroonemeijer (2005:100) notes that the difficulty of curses, and "hate speech" in the psalms has been the subject of study by various theologians, including Bonhoeffer, C S Lewis and Norris, who have argued against their exclusion from the Psalms and for their use within the faith community. Indeed, in a limited reading of selected passages, there may be an unseemly violent desire for retribution, however there is a broader understanding which sees the value of Psalm 83 as the experience of panic and crying out to God (Segal 2013:393). Rather than pretend that they don't exist, problematic statements and verses allow the faith community to find congruity

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with the human experience of biblical authors and the ability to "integrate these emotions into a healthy spiritual life" (Kroonemeijer 2005:100). In agreement, Douglas and Tenney note that the imprecatory psalms contain both vengeance pleas and truths that disallow their exclusion, and, that often the pleas themselves rely on what God has already established as his actions towards those who oppose him and/or his people (2011:645).

On the role of lament in spirituality, Pleins (1993:13) writes:

> "We may not think that we have done enough if we come to worship bearing only the pain of our suffering or our anger at social injustice, but even in this act of defiant worship, the psalms tell us, we have already established the foundation for a biblical spirituality … authentic worship emerges when worshipers dare to express their pain and raise before God their deepest questions about the reign of injustice in the world … The psalms of lament continually call us to plumb our beleaguered condition, give voice to our radical doubts about God's action in the world, and bring to the surface our disquiet over suffering."

It is quite right to find application of the Psalms to the modern reader, given that their background is one of "personal suffering and national disaster, individual hope and collective aspiration" (Pleins 1993:1). There are always individual tragedies to be found in large-scale, or even global, tragedies, which truthful worship cannot be detached from or unconcerned about (Pleins 1993:14). Furthermore, Kroonemeijer (2005:100) asserts that it is the "emotional quality … and not primarily their content or message" that is the benefit to the Christian reader of the psalms. Hence, whilst the content is important, there is value to be found in the "poetry … the drama and hyperbole of the psalms", especially as these pertain to appropriate interpretation of the psalms (Kroonemeijer 2005:100).

3.2.9.1   Identifying with the psalmist's experience of ethnic discrimination

Significant material was devoted to exploring the relationship of Israel with other Semitic and genetically linked nations (Edom, Ishmaelites, Moab, Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Assyria) as well as non-related peoples (Philistia and Tyre). The reason has been to gain an understanding into the development of enmity between related peoples, and whilst the causes may not always have been clear, the reality of violence propagated against a nationality (ethnic group) by others – sometimes not

too distantly removed – has been highlighted. In this section, we will establish the significance of the experience of the psalmist for the modern victim of ethnic violence.

The mention of Edom and the curse of Esau in section 3.2.5 is a useful analogy for this section. As was noted, Jacob (Israel) had stolen Esau's blessing (Gn 27:1-40), consigning Esau's descendants to warfare and impoverishment. In the South African context, it is possible to reinterpret this event along the refrain which is often used to justify xenophobic violence – that foreigners are stealing jobs (Allie 2006:n.p.) Harris' (2001:n.p.) findings in the 1999 White Paper on International Migration note that these assumptions are prevalent in official perspectives:

- they [illegal migrants] compete for scarce resources with millions of South Africans living in poverty and below the breadline;
- they compete for scarce public services, such as schools and medical care, infrastructures and land, housing and informal trading opportunities;
- they compete with residents and citizens for our insufficient job opportunities, and offer their labour at conditions below those prescribed by law or the applicable bargaining agreements;
- a considerable percentage of illegal aliens has been involved in criminal activities, and
- they weaken the state and its institutions by corrupting officials, fraudulently acquiring documents and undeserved rights and tarnishing our image locally and abroad

Another reason the Philistines may have been repulsive to the Israelites was their consumption of pork, whereas archaeology of villages in the interior of Canaan reflect an almost total absence of pork (Moore & Kelle 2011:131). Furthermore, the Philistines are accused with divination in Isaiah 2:6 (Ehrlich 2009:508). These relate to the conceptualisations of "our culture is better" discussed in the previous chapter, as a motivation for preventing connection or assimilation with other ethnic groups. The association of migrants and refugees with crime is, in part, owed to bureaucratic processes: the high levels of deportation in 2007 and 2008 create an environment whereby a parallel economy operates providing illicit means to avoid detection and/or deportation, and paradoxically, promoting illegal activity (Vigneswaran 2010:465). With regards to social services, there is also antagonism towards providing healthcare to foreign migrants, which is heightened against those seeking

asylum and refugee status (Crush & Tawodzera 2013:656). Despite the constitutional guarantee to healthcare, irrespective of nationality and legal status, directives to healthcare facilities have been necessary to prevent exclusion of foreign nationals from receiving treatment (Crush & Tawodzera 2013:657).

The mention of the Assyrians as a threat could be drawn as a parallel for the institutionalised xenophobia experienced by refugees in South Africa – the bureaucratic processes have become entrenched with discrimination. Prezanti (2008:n.p.) reports wide-spread corruption in the asylum and appeals processes. Without legal status, these refugees are vulnerable to crime, opportunistic and corrupt law enforcement and work-place exploitation (Prezanti 2008:n.p.) Keepile (2010:n.p.) lists various other forms of exclusion of foreigners from integration into South African economy and/or society:

- Computer systems and/or policies that only accommodate a 13-digit South African ID number – as do many online services;
- Higher credit risk associated with foreign nationalities serve as a barrier to finance;
- South African driving licences are by-and-large required for car financing, and conversion of international permits to the South African driver's license is cumbersome and inefficient; associated with this is a policy of policing that is suspicious of foreign drivers;
- Extensive requirements to secure a work permit;
- Financial requirements become a barrier to tertiary study for non-South Africans (or at least permanent residency).

Even in preventing exploitation, the bureaucratic requirement of a South African identity document precludes foreign workers from involvement in – and protection by – trade unions (Hlatshwayo 2011:183). Continuing our analysis of the Assyrian involvement as an analogy for state and/or institutionalised persecution, the findings of Desai (2010:100-101) are pertinent: police[28], having identified Africa migrant communities with crime, then proceed to harass and oust them, confiscate property and hound them on the streets, whilst the Durban mayor expressed reservation

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[28] Amisi et al (2011:60) also note with concern the police animosity towards foreign nationals.

about the role of non-governmental organisations and the possibility that they may "perpetuate the situation longer than necessary". These attitudes are found at various levels of law enforcement, and foreign nationals are targeted on the basis of appearance, just as in the case of xenophobic attacks (Masuku 2006:21, 23), and may be some baggage from the policing system in Apartheid South Africa (Rauch 2005:232).

These – and previous – discussions of attitudes to foreign nationals also relate to the desire of the enemies to "take … the pastures of the Lord": the oppressors have an innate and sometimes unspoken belief that their victims have no rightful claim to the land they are on. The observations of this study are certainly not exclusive to South Africa, given that ethnic discrimination is a global phenomenon, and more particularly, that other Southern African states are also grappling with the difficulties of ethnic identity, citizenry and remains of hierarchies inherited from colonialism (Nyamnjoh 2002:755).

Hence, we are left with a realisation that the oppressed and victimised may well experience the *gamut* of emotions covered in Psalm 83 – desperation, fear, panic, anger, a desire for retribution – and that resolution may be found for the internal crisis through approaching God in honesty and hope.

3.2.9.2   Relevant and arising questions

It is Brueggemann's (1995:6-7) contention that there is a "convergence of a contemporary pastoral agenda with a more historical exegetical interest", as seen in liturgical, devotional and therapeutic applications. Furthermore, Brueggemann (1995:7) suggests, whilst there may be vastly different historical and social settings for the contemporary reader from the psalmist, there is "continuity of function", meaning that there is a common intent in approaching and utilising the psalms within the human-emotional and faith experiences. Resolution of crises (disorientation events) is dependant in part on the state of those experiencing it – acceptance, and positive resolution of a new equilibrium is possible only to the extent that the individual (community) is "hopeful and healthy" (Brueggemann 1995:9). Such disorientation events are often associated with "dangerous language of extremity, which may express hope, but more likely, resistance" (Brueggemann 1995:9).

Reorientation, then, is the reframing of the reality, so as to produce hope, and is both continuous and a break from the past experience (Brueggemann 1995:9). It is the dynamic of orientation-disorientation-reorientation that is proposed as a method to engage with the function of the psalms (Brueggemann 1995:9). Questions arising from this section of the study:

- How does the act of imprecation against the enemies of God apply within a South African context, where there is a statistic majority Christian population?
- What is the benefit of imprecation outside of a faith community?

3.3 Conclusion

In the Ancient Near East, composition of laments (individual or communal) was the preserve of experts, seen in their the exclusive use of Mesopotamian religious lament languages such as Emesal, and "served to remind the gods of their responsibilities towards their creation" (Löhnert 2011:406-407, 414). By contrast, the Hebrew Scriptures show no such specialised language which is beyond the reach of the non-elites. Hence, the first significant conclusion drawn from this section is that there is no technical exclusion or even an idealised form that faith communities are subjected to in bringing their pleas, desperation and frustrations to God.

In the community laments, there is often a dearth of hope, and an absence of solutions, echoing the reality that sometimes there do not appear to be answers or reasons to hope in the face of destruction (Pleins 1993:44). In such environments and experiences, it is inadequate to boundary worship to only the pleasant, to "simple praise and thanksgiving", and, although the goal may be to move to praise, this must not be at the expense of acknowledging and experiencing the present reality of a community in suffering (Pleins 1993:44). As we seek to find a therapeutic use for imprecation and lament psalms, we must remember that a model does not short-circuit the process, and should avoid any tendency to gloss over the very real pain, injury and fear of the victims of ethnic violence. In addition to acknowledging both trauma and suffering of the faith community, healing also requires God's healing grace (Jones 2003:275). In Calvin's analysis, there is no quick answer or method, but rather the reckoning with the raw nature of suffering – without always

finding the reason – and appropriating the practice of the psalmists of prayer (Jones 2003:275). It is this appropriation which we will outline in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

SO MAY YOU PURSUE THEM WITH YOUR TEMPEST: OF VICTIMS, PERPETRATORS AND EXPRESSION

The constitution of South Africa assures the protection of certain key rights, namely "the right to life and … freedom and security of the person", and proactively determines that the right to freedom may not be infringed upon unduly, and that there is an implicit provision of protection from violence of any sort (Nathan 2013:3). Given the absence of these and many basic socio-economic rights for the majority of the South African population at the time of the constitution's drafting, it also made it incumbent upon government to extend these (and other) rights to the broader population through both legislative and practical means (Nathan 2013:4). Cohen (2013:59) observes that once the human rights to freedom from violence and discrimination enshrined in the South African Constitution are violated, other rights are easily violated as well. Where these rights are not furnished – or even infringed upon – the most vulnerable in society often lack recourse, which, Nathan (2013:7) contends includes foreigners, who are "seeking refuge … perilously insecure despite the fact that the Constitution affords them many rights"[29].

It is in the context of people who have been failed by state or civil society in preserving the constitutional guarantees of freedom and dignity that we are concerned to provide a means to therapeutic resolve in this section.

4.1   Ethics of Imprecatory Psalms and barriers to application

Psalms of individual lament contribute a third of the material found in the psalms, and in liturgy served to encourage worshippers to open expression of their "grief and … sorrow" (Pleins 1993:13). From suffering, the psalmist at times gives voice to strong demands of God, at times even directing anger towards God, reflecting the reality that "worship will remain a shallow affair if the worshiper's rage is left outside the sanctuary. This willingness to give expression to … agony … is, in biblical terms,

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[29] Nathan (2013:13) elucidates that certain rights are restricted to South African citizens (and identify as such), however, others, such as the "right to life" are extended to all persons within the country.

an act of worship" (Pleins 1993:15). As we will see in the ensuing discussion, this is not without problems.

4.1.1 Ethical dilemma stated and explained

Despite the grand words of Pleins (1993), there is nonetheless difficulty in approaching and appropriating the communal laments and imprecatory elements they contain (Day 2002:166; Strawn 2013:403). Creach's (2013:1) analysis of violence in scripture opens as follows:

> "One of the greatest challenges the church faces today is to interpret and explain passages in the Bible that seem to promote or encourage violence. It is perhaps not and exaggeration … [that this] is a major problem for Christians, both … [in terms of] theology … and the church's presentation of itself to the world"

As early as the second century CE, church leaders were attempting to reconcile the apparent vengeful and violent conception of God in the Old Testament with the loving conception of the New Testament (Creach 2013:2; Fretheim 2010:179). Marcion's response was to remove the offending texts, and secular society finds them to be causes for criticism of scripture, whilst Modernity and Enlightenment thinking make such passages secondary to "human reason … and ideals" (Creach 2013:2-3). In academia, Fretheim (2010:179) observes, there is an echo of Marcion's approach that is found in the neglect ("minimalist theological attention") of difficult images of God combined with "sharp criticism of patriarchal and violent images … even … rejection".

Hence, a "mistrust of the Bible and … dis-ease with … violent content" produce anxiety and tension in the modern reader, and often one of two approaches is suggested: "repress certain texts … [as] secondary, nonauthorative" or outright rejection of them (Creach 2013:3). Evidence of the omission of problematic passages is found in the Liturgy of the Hours of Roman Catholicism: three psalms (58, 83 and 109) are completely omitted and sections of a further nineteen other psalms have also been omitted (Holladay 1993:304). Whether in full or in part, "All the omissions involve imprecations … that occur in laments" (Holladay 1993:305). Simultaneously, changes in cultural understandings of violence and a broader audience approaching scripture have brought these difficulties squarely into the discourse of both church and academia (Fretheim 2010:179).

As regards the imprecatory psalms, Creach (2013:193) notes that whilst scripture clearly presents God as one who blesses and curses, there is often an overemphasis in modern thinking on God as one of blessing, minimising the curse aspect. On the surface, the imprecatory psalms seem to present a discordant view of God, and a theology contrary to New Testament teachings such as:

> "Jesus' instructions to love and pray for one's enemies (Matt. 5:43-48) and to contradict his model prayer … [for] 'God to forgive us … as we forgive …' (Matt. 6:12). The apostle Paul echoes Jesus' teaching and holds up his practice as an example … [to] 'Bless those who curse you' (Rom. 12:14), and … 'Do not avenge yourselves' (Rom. 12:19)" (Creach 2013:194).

In response, Christian community has, at times, considered imprecatory psalms to be illegitimate forms of prayer, however there is a historical tradition of neither rejecting these psalms nor appropriating them as individual prayers, and in Augustinian thought, considering them the "prayers of Jesus" (Creach 2013:194). Broadly speaking, Creach advocates an understanding that "the imprecatory psalms are protests against violence [against the powerless], not approvals of violence" (2013:194).

4.1.2 Reconciliation of the ethical dilemma

In light of these apparent contradictions and difficulties of reconciling the sometimes paradoxical biblical elements relating to the curse and imprecation formulae, several theorists weigh in to provide a brief reconciliation. Creach (2013:5-10) presents five guiding assumptions that may assist modern readers of passages that "seem to promote violence":

1. "The understanding of violence as human action that opposed the reign of God is communicated in part by the order and shape of the canon … God's involvement in destructive activity is understood as corrective and redemptive in nature.
2. In addition to the broad structures of the canon that help frame difficult passages, many passages … have within them self-correcting features that actually counter the violence they seem at first to allow.
3. The historical circumstances in which portions of the Bible were written speak against any easy justification of violence.
4. The early church promoted spiritual interpretations of passages that seem to promote violence … [which] have more validity than many modern readers have recognized.

5. The Bible sometimes presents and approves destructive action for the sake of liberation from oppression, but judgment and justice are presented as God's prerogative, not the right of responsibility of humans …Rather, they are called to rely on God, the ultimate judge and arbiter of justice."

Imprecation in the Old Testament has several foundations, as Day (2002:168) notes: God's assurance of divine vengeance (Deut 32:1-43), justice, cursing and blessing (Gen 12:2-3). Holding the New Testament ethics outlined above in esteem, it is significant that imprecation is found in the New Testament as well (Day 2002:183-185):

- Jesus cursed the fig tree allegorically of Israel (Mark 11:14)

- Paul declares that any who preach a false gospel should be accursed (Gal 1:8-9)

- Peter pronounces a curse over Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:20) along with a call to repentance (Acts 8:22)

- The martyrs in Revelation 6:10 cry out for vengeance

Clifford points to the value of psalms such as psalm 83 for their ability to capture the reality of "cognitive dissonance", of those occasions when evil encroaches on the life and well-being of the believer, and whilst it does not bring full comprehension of the mechanisms at work, the believer is given assurance that "God is not indifferent to evil and that judgment on wickedness has been pronounced" (2003:66-67). The intensity of the pleas are directly related to the perceived threat, but, crucially, the outworking of justification and/or vengeance are the preserve of God alone (2003:70). Furthermore, the aim of the psalmist, both as noted in the exegesis of the previous chapter and commentators such as Clifford (2003:70) is that God's reign would extend over all.

The present writer, while taking notice of the ten points Holladay lists in defence, disagrees with the statement that "We may tentatively conclude that in Christian worship we are occasionally justified in omitting certain sequences in the Psalms" (Pleins 1993:311-313). It is my belief that such a practice is to make mute the suffering and victimised, and exclude their experience from their spiritual and communal life, as is discussed in the next section. Rather, there is a scriptural

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precedent for the victimised to call for justice, retribution and a putting-right of the world and their world(s).

4.2 Space for imprecation and communal lament as pastoral reconciliation

Worship must reckon with the realities of "poverty, oppression, and death" and provide a mode to bring all of human emotion to God as it is carried by worshipers (Pleins 1993:14). In the psalms, we find a variety of postures that the suffering worshiper can assume in worship, including cries for assistance and salvation to be heard by God and find mercy (Pleins 1993:14). The communal laments find their context in communal events, such as "war, dislocation, refugee flight, exile, oppression and despair" (Pleins 1993:31). Crenshaw (2001:81) attributes the development of communal laments to crises that were far-reaching enough as to implore the entire community in their plea to God, such as military threat or natural disasters.

The experience of dislocation, disaster and disorientation may be both psychological and sociological, and as an extreme experience is associated with extreme emotions and the realisation that conventional speech (liturgy?) is insufficient for expression (Brueggemann 1995:8). Of particular interest for this study is the observation that political realities precipitate the community laments, and these may be varied: "war, colonialism, refugee flight, and international exploitation" (Pleins 1993:42).

Imprecatory psalms are an honest reflection of emotions and experiences – albeit from a particular perspective – which are not far-removed ancient concerns, but are also modern realities (Strawn 2013:405). The mainstream adoption of *gangsta rap* – along with its glorified lifestyle of violence – is telling (Strawn 2013:410-411). Several corollaries are drawn in Strawn's (2013:411-414) analysis of general acceptance of *gangsta rap* and culture:

1. Objections to imprecation and cursing in scripture are not regularly held against the violent nature of much *gangsta rap*, where commercial interests dominate.

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2. Although rap does not claim to be scripture, it is nonetheless adhered to and taken authoritatively by many, who are able to identify with its emotions and anger.

3. Whilst the merit of "honest disclosure" in response to trauma is well documented for both imprecatory psalms and rap.

4. The re-identification of rap artists as either new groups or entrepreneurs reflects compartmentalization of the persona is in vivid contrast to the integration of the whole person found in the imprecatory psalms.

The imprecatory psalms do not stand in isolation, but form part of a "larger liturgical and literary context of prayer, which helps to hold the violence back from one's enemies" (Strawn 2013:414). In addition, the imprecatory psalms are sometimes found between some great promises and expressions of faith, and form but one example of a response to enemies in the psalter (Strawn 2013:414-415). Not surprisingly, then, Strawn (2012:415) notes greater healing potential in the appropriation of the imprecatory psalms than for that of rap, as there is both the limitation on active violence and the integration (non-compartmentalization) of the individual.

4.2.1 Tension between Freedom of Speech enshrined in the South African Constitution[30] and hate speech and/or summonses to violence

As far as internet forums are concerned, Nel (2012:251) draws attention to the right of freedom of expression in section 16 of the Constitution, which includes the rights to freedom of speech and freedom to receive information. Nel (2012:251) further writes:

> "Freedom of opinion and expression is widely acknowledged as a basic human right that should be available to all, as it plays a crucial role in a fair and open society. However … this freedom comes with certain restrictions and responsibilities."

Internationally, governments are faced with the challenges of allowing freedom of speech (as far as their laws allow) and also the security of the populace, particularly with regards to exposure to pornography, defamation and hate speech (Nel

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[30] Hereafter simply referred to as the Constitution.

2012:251). Hence, there is increasing evidence of restrictions placed on online communications (Nel 2012:251).

South African law has faced difficulty in balancing the rights "to a good name … an unimpaired reputation"[31] and freedom of expression (Nel 2012:251). Internet communications are a challenge in the scope and range of information dissemination, posing a greater "risk of defamation and … resultant damage" (Nel 2012:251). Intentionality, a traditional prerequisite for defamation, has in contemporary South African law included negligent publication, which can include "text, graphics, audio or video" (Nel 2012:252).

Hate speech, defined by Nel (2012:269), is "epithets or disparaging and abusive words and phrases directed at individuals or groups who represent a specific race, religion, ethnic background, gender or sexual preference". Section 16(2) of the Constitution clearly outlaws the use of freedom of speech when advocating for hatred based on the criteria aforementioned (Nel 2012:271). The virulence of online hate speech is hard to define as it may be defined narrowly (for example only white supremacist) or broadly (all sites which may contain offensive and/or insensitive material) (Nel 2012:270). In addition to the Constitution, the Films and Publications Act, Section 29(1) further considers that "distribution of hate speech is a criminal offence" with the exclusion of legitimate material of artistic, scientific, literary or religious nature (Nel 2012:271). The provisions of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 (2000) are especially pertinent to the concerns of this study, and will be listed as provided by Nel (2012:271):

> "… no person may publish, propagate, advocate or communicate words based on one or more of the prohibited grounds[32], against any person that could reasonably be construed to demonstrate a clear intention to
> a) be hurtful
> b) be harmful or to incite harm, or
> c) promote or propagate hatred"

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[31] Nel (2012:251) explains that whilst this right is not a constitutional right, it is nonetheless considered to be in common law, "… and can be protected under the right to dignity in terms of Section 10 of the Constitution of 1996."

[32] As with the other provisions, these extend to discrimination based on "race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour … religions … culture, language and birth" (Nel 2012:271).

As with defamation, the key concern is that of intentionality (Nel 2012:272) – and this is our primary caution, that as we seek a therapeutic use of the imprecatory psalms for victims of ethnic discrimination and/or violence, we must guard against creating the incitement of violence or vengeance.

4.2.2 Defining a space for the use of Imprecatory Psalms

Following the methodology of John Calvin, Jones (2003:269) find that there is indeed pastoral concern for people who are experiencing "violent social crisis and who are asking questions about what it means to be faithful in this context" in the psalms. When considered in parallel with trauma theory, the psalms and commentaries together reveal "resonant patterns … [the] capacity to enter the violence-torn world … and to speak … a theologically powerful – and timeless – word of hope and healing" (Jones 2003:270). Whereas trauma brings disruption of order, and may manifest in difficulty speaking and relating one's experiences and feelings, poetry gives opportunity for expression precisely because "it does not assume regular patterns of coherence … a world unfolding in perfect order … [and language may be] moved in unanticipated ways by passions that are often conflicting and disordered" (Jones 2003:272-274).

Drawing on the observations of Brueggemann, Boda (2008:81) points out the deficiency of lament in the faith community has two primary aspects – firstly, there is a "loss of 'genuine covenant interaction' because one party … has either been silenced", and secondly precludes discussions that address theodicy. Retention of the Imprecatory Psalms as scripture and a form of prayer presumes three assumptions (Creach 2013:195): Imprecatory Psalms are ultimately prayers for "God's will to be done 'on earth as it is in heaven'" (Matt. 6:10); imprecatory psalms allow voice and "crucial perspective on the meaning of victimization and suffering"; and, finally, that Imprecatory Psalms neither propose violence to end victimization nor seek God's empowerment to enact his vengeance, meaning that "they turn vengeance over to God".

Giving expression to pain, fear and trauma is only part of the process however, as the "healing power of grace" is found in grappling with – and finding to be true – the

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promises of God to be present, redeem and bring transformation, in the midst of the pleas and groans (Jones 2003:275). Calvin, rather than seeking an exhaustive and satisfactory explanation for the trauma of people, points them to a practice of prayer, which may bring healing and resolution in the midst of distress (Jones 2003:275). Tate (1990:349) commends Psalm 83 as a reminder that:

> "The greatest resource of the people of Yahweh is prayer. Which appeals both directly to him and is based on his powerful acts of intervention and deliverance in the past … the king of all nations and the judge of all the earth hears prayer and will in his own time and ways sweep his goes away as a fire roars through a forest and sweeps over the mountains in blazing fury."

Treatment of trauma is a multi-stage process, the second of which (giving voice to the experience of trauma), requires a safe second person as a witness through whom the assurance can be given of being heard, welcomed and legitimacy (Jones 2003:276-277). It is the therapeutic benefit of being heard by another which provides a clue as to a possible implementation of the imprecatory psalms: developing safe places with safe people whom the victims of violence can experience their pain, fear and anger through the poetry of these psalms[33]. The goal of such action is to "recast [hopelessness] in the space of divine grace … [where] we are not alone but rather exist with a God who offers us, unceasingly, a future" (Jones 2003:277).

4.3   Cautions in the usage of imprecation and communal laments

South African society has much instability caused by lingering financial inequality – as seen in the perennial status as one of the leaders in the Gini coefficient ratings[34] (Lynch 2014:110). The resulting "frustration and aggression often appear to be growing, with protests … increasing in both frequency and intensity", and hence the cautions presented in this section are necessary given the explosive nature of discontent in "one of the most unequal societies on earth" (Lynch 2014:110).

4.3.1 Lessons from history – the media, hate speech and contemporary dialogue

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[33] The lament psalms are particularly suited to this exercise (Jones 2003:280-281).
[34] An economic measure of inequality as determined by examining the "distribution of household incomes" (Lynch 2014:110).

The role of the media in establishing, maintaining and promoting ethnic identity conflicts is alluded to by Annan (2011:17) who cautions: "… no one is born a racist. Children learn racism as they grow up from the society around them, and *too often the stereotypes are reinforced, deliberately or inadvertently, by the mass media*" (emphasis added). An example of inadvertent promulgation of discriminatory messages in South Africa is the *Proudly South African Campaign*, which promoted local industry and employment, at the expense of greater unity with Africa and labourers from other countries (Hlatshwayo 2011:175). Ethnic discrimination and violence in Africa show a complex interplay of "colonial heritage, educated unemployment and ethnic violence", particularly so when it is considered that colonial and post-colonial educational systems bear evidence of promoting the discrimination (Lange 2012:153). Zartman and Anstey (2012:7) draw our attention to the instrumentalist view that "[ethnic identities] are not biological but social and political constructs", and whilst there may be tenuous grounds for biological differentiation, the relevance of this observation for the present section, is that there is a learned ethnicity – which is promulgated and maintained through various mechanisms, of which media is but one. In addition to passively conveying fixed attitudes, media may at times be misappropriated for the active call to ethnic violence, as seen in the 1994 Rwandan genocide (Donohue 2012:55). Hutu radio stations and media not only called for the extermination of the Tutsis, but some would even "identify targets for Hutu militias" (Donohue 2012:55).

Donahue (2012:55) reports that Stanton has identified three categories (eight stages) of social unrest and change that contribute to the escalation of ethnic identity conflicts towards genocides: Classification, Symbolization and Dehumanization; early intervention is more effective than interventions once the situation has escalated. Once Classification becomes established in society and media, an *Identity Trap* is set, and intervention is then required to prevent escalation (Donohue 2012:67). The first marker is found in statements reflecting a fear of threat to personal well–being, which may be as subtle as dismissive attitudes or statements that may be repeated over time with increasing force and rhetoric with the aim to "erode affiliation and escalate the classification into symbolization" (Donohue 2012:68). Hence, our first caution is to advise that there be a greater awareness of the presence of these elements in society, and media in particular, and guard

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against passivity when we encounter them. A second marker is the usage of *tropes* – "Words such as expansionist or terrorist are used to classify all individuals who identify with the other side … [and are] a rhetorical tool to justify actions" (Donohue 2012:68) – and this is our second caution – an examination of labels which are employed dismissively or even disparagingly is warranted to avoid reinforcing them in our attempt to give voice to the victimised.

Approaches to avoid escalation of identity traps are (Donohue 2012:68): recognition of the (possibly unintentional) setting of such a rhetorical trap; channelling the discussion towards the "substantive issue" as opposed to emotional and subjective responses; mediation to reduce interdependence (even if temporarily); choosing to respond to the issues raised which do not illicit identity traps. A proactive approach is also suggested by Donohue (2012:68-69) in the establishment of mechanisms to monitor language and rhetoric for *red flags* (tropes) which could assist with an early warning system to prevent escalation. Anstey and Meerts (2012:387) likewise suggest that it is fitting to monitor media in "high-risk scenarios to evaluate shifts to language that might provoke genocide". Potential aversive actions could be the disruption of problematic media (ethically questionable and untenable indefinitely), actively engaging in positive and helpful media releases, making the consequences of violent action known (and a dissuading factor), identifying (and securing) "safe zones" and announcing (and enforcing) the arrival of security and peace-keeping forces (Anstey & Meerts 2012:387).

Romero-Trillo (2012:73) provides a further insight for this study into the cautions, and that is that political and military leaders should be informed and aware of their ability to escalate or deescalate conflict is linked to the "influence and support of the media". Indeed, there must be an awareness of the ideology and bias present in language and rhetoric and the power of the media in furthering and/or being usurped to political/ethnic agendas (Romero-Trillo 2012:82).

South African media is considered to be a strong element of society, and should rightly be involved in "exposing wrongdoing; teasing out its implications by consulting multiple sources and supplying elements of context and background" (Lynch 2014:133). The failure of media to provide the "context and background" Lynch

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speaks of – whether by omission or commission – has potentially disastrous outcomes. Analysis shows that South African media regularly uses exaggerated and emphatic language in negative characterisations of foreign nationals in the country (Crush & Ramachandran 2010:216):

> "In South Africa, media analysts have shown how negative, unanalytical reporting perpetuates and entrenches stereotypes of migration and migrants (McDonald and Danso, 2001; McDonald and Jacobs, 2005; Fine and Bird, 2006; Vigneswaran, 2007). Xenophobic discourse in South Africa constructs migrants as a threat to the economic, social and cultural rights and entitlements of citizens. Migrants 'pour' in and 'invade' in 'waves' and 'floods' and 'avalanches', invariably 'swamping' local communities and job markets. They are typecast as bringers of disease, crime and a variety of other social ills. They steal jobs and compete unfairly with citizens for resources, shelter and public services. All migrants are generally homogenized as 'aliens', 'foreigners' and 'illegals'. They are called derogatory names, denigrated in insulting language and repeatedly told to 'go home'. Recently, the migration metaphors used to depict the general 'threat' of migration have been applied to a 'human tide' and 'flood' of Zimbabweans" (Mawadza, 2010).

In our attempts to provide a model for application of the psalmist's experience and resolution of ethnic discrimination, we must guard against further engendering these attitudes.

There are, however, positive uses of curse formulae and imprecation in the history of society, as Morrow (2008:139-140) notes, a lament composed in 1147CE by Isaac bar Shalom[35] was a mechanism of reconciling the experience of Jewish persecution by Christian crusaders and the perceived silence of God, which became a supplementary prayer in the Ashkenazi communities as they commemorated the Nazi destruction of Rhineland Jewish populations. Textual allusions are found in bar Shalom's lament, both in form, and in quotes from Psalms 44, 80 and 83:2 and Isaiah 64 (Morrow 2008:141). Strikingly, Morrow (2008:145-146) draws our attention to the trauma of violence and its influence on the worldview ("assumptive world") of victims, in the context of *There Is No One Like You among the Dumb*, there was a loss of the assumptions that God would continue to act on behalf of Israel, and that

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[35] Anti-Semitism was rife amongst the crusaders marauding France and Germany, leading bar Shalom to pen a lament, *There Is No One Like You among the Dumb* (Morrow 2008:139).

even in catastrophe God can be approached. In the context of the crusaders' marauding, the

> "… very institutions that mediate the divine presence are decisively destroyed … With Torah and Talmuds destroyed … God's presence was not simply attenuated – it was decisively removed … It [the broken assumptive view] could be met, however, by reviving symbols in the tradition that responded to … loss in earlier times: community lament" (Morrow 2008:146)

4.3.2 Suggested guidelines to avoid hate speech and/or violence

Cohen (2013:61) records the response of the South African government to simmering xenophobia in the late 1990's and early 2000's: "extensive advocacy and media activities, and … working relationships … to monitor xenophobia"[36] and legislative means[37]. Despite involvement with and review by various international bodies (notably linked to the UN) through 2006 and 2008, the inadequate implementation of measures proved ineffective in stemming the growth of xenophobic attitudes which resulted in the 2008 xenophobic attacks (Cohen 2013:61-63). Ethnic conflicts are inflamed into "targeted mass killings" (or violent outbursts) when "Instigators … feel themselves targeted, ultimately for extinction, by another identity group whom they feel must be defeated and ultimately exterminated" (Zartman & Anstey 2012:3). Hence we note the importance of avoiding creating a situation where in our efforts to assist the victims of ethnic discrimination, we inadvertently create a situation where they are perceived as a threat (existentially, financially or otherwise).

Nonetheless, it is the very experience of violence and trauma that drives the psalmist to use expressive – and at times – offensive language that is key to the healing of trauma for those who would appropriate imprecatory psalms as a mechanism for healing. Imprecatory and lament psalms give vocabulary and language to experiences that defy explanation, and that the "more caustic [honest] the language became, the more expansive the possibilities of healing" (Jones 2003:280-281). In giving voice to trauma, however, there must be a shift, a movement to grace, and

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[36] The *Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign* of 1998 was a joint initiative between the SAHRC, National Consortium for Refugee Affairs and UNHCR (Cohen 2013:61).
[37] Immigration Act 13 of 2002 entails commitments to "promote education on the rights of foreigners throughout government and state institutions and in communities" (Cohen 2013:61).

hope, otherwise the exercise may become an incitement to violent vengeance, which is thoroughly incompatible with biblical ethics (Jones 2003:284).

4.4   Conclusion

In our treatment of the experience of ethnic victimization and a proposed pastoral intervention, we cannot overlook the reality that genocides and mass violence do not spontaneously erupt:

> "Genocide does not burst out unannounced: it is preceded and prepared by identity conflict that escalates from social friction to contentious politics, from politics to violence, and eventually to targeted mass killing" (Zartman & Anstey 2012:3).

Hence, whilst it is not the focus of this study, the present author wishes to state emphatically that pastoral interventions – whilst significant for trauma resolution and establishing healthy emotional, psychological and spiritual states – will remain insufficient in the absence of broad-scale changes in identity and ethnic conflicts. In the words of Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1466-1536CE), "Prevention is better than cure" (Erasmus 2015:n.p.) As early as 2000, it was noted that refugees needed better education regarding their rights and "how to keep safe" (Independent Online 2000:n.p.) – however, the present author suggests that to be inadequate given the findings thus far.

In this chapter we have surveyed the difficulties of the Imprecatory Psalms, and the various resolutions that have been put forward, most notably is that of the imprecation is not a description of violence to be enacted by the psalmist, but a plea for God's intervention. Whilst the usefulness of the imprecatory psalms for therapeutic release and healing for victims of ethnic violence has also been considered (with reference to trauma theorist Herman), we have also had to consider the cautions posed by the potential for violence and/or infringement of constitutional rights.

Creach (2013:213) provides an important insight as we conclude this chapter, namely that the scriptural practice of associating God with vengeance refers to "God defending a moral order in the world". A final caution is warranted, as Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:362) warn, the understanding of the imprecatory psalms that the

psalmist's enemies are the enemies of God, can easily be misappropriated to mean that *any enemy* is the enemy of God – and we would do well to leave the final judgment of *who* is the enemy of God to El-yon, the Most High.

Chapter 5   CONCLUSION

This study has a dual concern – determining the potential role of the Imprecatory Psalms (and communal laments) in modern discourse and faith communities, and secondly an application of the aforementioned to the displaced and/or ethnically victimised peoples within South Africa. Crush and Tawodzera (2014:655) draw our attention to the actuality that "Xenophobia has become deeply institutionalised in post-Apartheid society".

Kofi Annan (2011:14), in a statement[38] provides a poignant realisation regarding the realities of ethnic discrimination:

> "One thing we can celebrate is the fact that racism if now universally condemned. Few people in the world today openly deny that human beings are born with equal rights. But far too many people are still victimized because they belong to a particular group – whether national, ethnic, religious or … gender or descent."

An observation of Annan's (2011:14) that bears particular importance for this study is that migrants are often victimised on the basis of their perceived lack of rights and/or protection, by the very people who have sought their labour. Among the rights afforded to migrants and asylum seekers by the Refugees Act No. 130 of 1998 were limits on detentions, and identity documents, travel permissions, medical care and education for approved asylum-permit holders (Klotz 2013:193). However, as Klotz (2013:193-194) observes, there has been a persistent mal-intent towards refugees and asylum seekers in much of the legislation that has been drafted to afford them protections in post-Apartheid South Africa – whether in the form of language that presupposes an unjustified abuse of the system that must be curbed, or in the enthusiastic passing of bills by parliament given the "reiteration of an overarching goal to exclude foreigners". In the aftermath of the 2008 xenophobic attacks, many displaced peoples were without formal protections as they lacked formal recognition as refugees (Klotz 2013:198).

Berlin (2008:3) paraphrases the author of Ecclesiastes by stating that "Of the making of commentaries there is no end", but is quick to note the importance of the

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[38] Transatlantic Commission on Race, Ethnicity, Immigration and Citizenship.

continuing practice of exegesis and commentary, as "each new commentary is an expression of engagement with the text at a particular moment, reflecting … scholarship … needs … and … choices".

When faced with the extent of xenophobic violence and the trauma experienced across South Africa, even venerated human rights activists such as former Methodist Church Head, Bishop Paul Verryn expressed exasperation (Monama 2015:2):

> "There is more than one way to kill someone. I have no idea how these people are going to heal. They will have this pain for years, especially the children"

Inasmuch as biblical exegesis seeks to allow scripture to speak for itself, and to avoid eisogesis, there is both a place – and urgent need – for theological exegesis to bring the hope (and therapeutic methods) of scripture to those who have been victimised.

5.1   Analysis of the methodology

In approaching the bible as scripture, exegesis is often short-circuited by established traditions and theologies, as Hayes & Holladay (2007:15) explain:

> "The Bible as sacred Scripture is surrounded by various traditions and traditional interpretations. The exegete is frequently tempted to read the text in light of these traditions – what we were taught it meant – without exercising any critical judgment or allowing the text to speak on its own terms … this is to engage in … 'eisegesis'."

As such, there are three main questions that exegesis and commentaries must answer and be evaluated against: "What needs to be pointed out to the reader? How much explanation is required and of what type … ? What overall impression should the reader be left with about the meaning of this book [passage] and its place in the Bible?" (Berlin 2008:3). Furthermore, a commentary is not only a survey of existing and new scholarship, but is, to some extent, an interpretation (Berlin 2008:3).

Emanuel (2012:2) raises two pertinent questions for exegetical analysis of tradition in texts: firstly, what sources were used by the psalmist, and secondly, how were these sources employed (for example, is there rearrangement or alteration, and what would have motivated it?)

5.2   Summary of Findings

Ethnic identity – whether primordial or functionalist – is a felt reality, as is the perceived threat of another ethnic group. Ethnic identities may be deeply entrenched through education, media, tribal and/or racial affiliations, government policy and legislation, or the absence of any of the aforementioned. In South Africa, there has been all of the aforementioned conditions – deep seated tribal loyalties were manipulated and entrenched by colonial and Apartheid government. Enigmatic leaders have been able to harness the diversity of South African society to mobilise for peace, unity and social goodwill, however, the reverse is also possible, presenting a paradox:

> "It is commonly argued that identity cannot be negotiated, yet it also seems that identity is multitiered and quite malleable under certain circumstances. Identity conflicts are concerned with matters of civilization, culture, race, religion, language, and other such markers. … Their intensity may vary with the presence or demise of of particular leaders … This [resolution] requires attention not only to the process dimensions of conflict moments but also to the structural variables that maintain them" (Zartman & Anstey 2012:6).

Hence, although ethnic identity may appear to be fixed, we note that there is scope for redefinition of both one's own and other ethnicities – to suit an agenda or preference – and that prevention of violence and ethnic discrimination demands not only an awareness of the mechanisms of ethnic identity formation but also the ways in which we (citizens, nationals, and people) *enable* these systems to endure. Silence in the face of violence and disregard of victims when an arbitrary, subjective level of humanitarian assistance has been rendered, are both examples of apathy allowing a discriminatory system to endure. A further complication is that the weighted relevance of ethnic markers (culture, education, religion etc.) may also reflect "salience … being defined by the situation" (Zartman & Anstey 2012:8) – in South Africa, this may be loyalty to a tribe, a city, a region or an ethnicity in varying degrees.

The net outcome of the 2008 xenophobic violence is summarised by Monson and Arian (2011:26): "two weeks of violence; 62 dead, including 21 South Africans; 100000 displaced; more than 1300 arrests". Chigeza et al (2013:501) observe that this outbreak marked the most significant spate of violence inflicted by black South Africans against black migrants and refugees from other nations. Reporting of the

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various accounts inevitably contains redaction, reflecting the political stance(s) of the media outlets, as well as the understanding of "membership, belonging and identity" within the *milieu* along with attempts to depoliticise the events (Monson & Arian 2011:26-27). The very language and terminology employed are telling moral and political critiques, and the norms which dictate the engagements between the national (citizen) and foreigner (non-citizen) (Monson & Arian 2011:27-28). In much of the reporting of the violence of 2008, the emphasis is placed on the emotional pique of the crowds, however, as Monson and Arian (2011:32) demonstrate, the histories in many regions and the behavioural patterns indicate "mobilisation … [and] a check to apolitical notions of mob action". It is both shocking and notable that prior to the initial outburst of violence in Alexandra Section 2 in 2008, there had been various meetings in which the "security problem posed by illegal immigrants" was discussed (Monson & Arian 2011:33).

In surveying reporting from the early 2000's, it is tragic to note how familiar the situation sounds and the motivations to violence are (Harris 2001:n.p.) Following the May 2008 xenophobia attacks, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) outlined nine policy failures by the South African government (Cronje 2008:n.p.):

1. Failure to maintain law and order, as evidenced by the lack of dismissals of non-performing ministers;
2. Inadequate border control;
3. Corruption at many levels of the state resulting in a lack of trust in state functions;
4. An average 40% unemployment, markedly higher for young black South Africans;
5. Poor education which leaves school-leavers unable to secure higher studies or adequate employment;
6. Economic policies which have sacrificed economic growth for ideology;
7. Silence on matters of foreign policy that should have been condemned in other countries;
8. Poor service delivery combined with a belief that continued ANC support meant increased happiness with the levels of service delivery;
9. A return to focus on "re-racialising" South African society during Mbeki's tenure.

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Amongst the factors noted by the SAIRR, there are some which relate to lack of service delivery – the main factor noted in the analysis by Chigeza et al ("as a result of civic tension caused by poor service delivery by the government"); many of these tensions were noted to be present in research in 2010 onwards (Chigeza et al 2013:501). In a survey of reporting on the various outbreaks across Gauteng, Monson and Arian note a recurrent presentation of dichotomy – local versus foreigner, citizen (national) versus non-citizen (non-national) – and is in itself a reflection of a nationalist bias (2011:52). Chigeza (2013:502) et al observe that this dichotomy is indeed related to the history of Apartheid South Africa, where the white minority held resources and power and made decisions benefitting the in-group, and following 1994, the expected benefits weren't realised for many of the South African black citizens, perpetuating the competitive dichotomy. The group dynamic of South African society – whereby "the people in South African were conditioned to think in terms of groups" – and hence behaviour is conditioned by group responses instead of individual culpability (Chigeza et al 2013:504). These findings show a society that is deeply divided and carries animosity towards not only members of out-groups, but even towards those of its own in-group(s). A surprising finding is that this in-group mentality is spread across society: a survey in Gauteng showed near equivalence (three-quarters of respondents) of agreement between residents with and without tertiary education with the belief that "foreigners are taking benefits meant for South Africans" (IRIN 2010a:n.p.)

Hence, in addition to seeking to provide healing for the victims of ethnic discrimination, violence and xenophobia, Mamphele Ramphele spoke clearly of the need to establish a healthy society (Rauch 2005:235):

> "If you have had a society that criminalized normal behaviour, and normalized criminal behaviour, it will not be easy to change that society simply on the basis of an excellent Constitution, watchdog institutions, and people who affirm their commitment to a democracy. It will require the focused building of a culture that recognizes the very faulty foundations of our society."

Latent in the imprecatory psalms is the recognition that *all is not well* – the psalmist appeals to both past memory and the promises of God to his people as reasons for divine action and vindication. An unexpected outcome of the use of imprecatory

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psalms may be that the inflictors of victimization may be given a chance to recognise the pain that they have inflicted, as well as the more straightforward therapeutic value for the victims to be given voice. In the South African context, the decisive and deliberate anti-foreigner sentiment presents a further challenge: a concerted and deliberate effort is needed to create both a space for, and to legitimize, the need for victims to speak out and be given voice.

5.4   Limitations of the study

This study has been a literature and exegetical analysis, and has yielded insights into matters of ethnicity, ethnic bias and/or conflict and the potential for pastoral resolution of victims' experiences. However, the painful reality is that this is woefully inadequate in light of the urgent need to bring about large-scale societal change to prevent the recurrences which have blighted the allure of the New South Africa.

Over the course of an extensive study, it is easy to start treating and conceptualising the ethnic discrimination and violence as an abstract, foreign concept, however, we do both the aims of this study and the victims themselves a disservice by such reductionism.

5.5   Recommendations

If we are to appropriate the imprecatory psalms as a mechanism for pastoral care of the victims of (ethnic) violence, we provide not only psychological release, but also hope that God's justice would be seen both in the world to come and in this life (Day 2002:186; 2 Thes 1:6-10; Ps 27:13). Further study on the implementation of imprecatory psalms for victims of ethnic violence is needed, particularly as regards to a structured model for therapeutic ends. In addition, further areas of study include:

- How does the act of imprecation against the enemies of God apply within a South African context, where there is a statistic majority Christian population?
- What is the benefit of imprecation outside of a faith community?

5.6   Hypothesis

A further limitation is that of the grandiose ambition to define the imprecatory psalms as a *genre* that lends itself to application in the context of ethnic victimisation, whereas research (particularly in chapter 3) questions the first assumption that there is a fixed form/genre of 'imprecatory psalms', and showed that whilst communal laments are easier to identify, and that elements of imprecation abound throughout them, the conceptualisation of "the imprecatory psalms" may be a hindrance to further study.

Nonetheless, there is a history of protest songs which appeal to God in South African history, and hence the proposal that there is a space for lament psalms for communal healing is not entirely without precedent (Twala & Koetaan 2006:172).

Imprecatory prayer forms a legitimate religious experience and can be appropriated as a form of expression for the victims of ethnically motivated violence (ethnic discrimination) for spiritual and psychological healing, however cannot be used to incite reciprocal violence.

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APPENDIX A

Results of strophic and disjunctive analysis tabulated, including verb parsing; part 1:

Stanza	Strophe	Dividing Disjunctive	Verse	Line	ESV	Literal and Direct Translation	Hebrew Text	Verb	Verbal Parsing
		Sillûq	1	1	A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.	(A) song (a) psalm (accompanied s	שִׁ֖יר מִזְמ֣וֹר לְאָסָֽף׃		
		'Atnāḥ	2a	2	O God, do not keep silence;	(O) God, do not (be) silent/at rest	אֱלֹהִ֥ים אַל־דֳּמִי־לָ֑ךְ		
		Sillûq	2b	3	do not hold your peace or be still, O	O do not be silent and do not be quiet	אַל־תֶּחֱרַ֖שׁ וְאַל־תִּשְׁקֹ֣ט אֵֽל׃	תֶּחֱרַ֖שׁ Qal Jussive Imperfect 2p sing. Of חרשׁ ("to be silent") תִּשְׁקֹ֣ט Qal Jussive Imperfect 2p singular of שׁקט ("to be deaf, silent")	
		'Atnāḥ	3a	4	For behold, your enemies make an	For, behold, your enemies roar (emphatic)	כִּֽי־הִנֵּ֣ה אוֹיְבֶ֭יךָ יֶהֱמָי֑וּן	יֶהֱמָי֑וּן Qal Imperfect 3p masc plural of המה ("to make a noise") + Paragogic Nun	
A	I	Sillûq	3b	5	those who hate you have raised their heads.	and the ones who hate you have raised head	וּ֝מְשַׂנְאֶ֗יךָ נָ֣שְׂאוּ רֹֽאשׁ׃	מְשַׂנְאֶ֗יךָ piel participle masc. pl. of שׂנא ("to hate, to despise") נָ֣שְׂאוּ QAL perf 3P Pl. of נשׂא ("to lift, raise")	
		'Atnāḥ	4a	6	They lay crafty plans against your people;	Against your people they have been crafty, a confidential discussion (is held)	עַֽל־עַ֭מְּךָ יַעֲרִ֣ימוּ ס֑וֹד	יַעֲרִ֣ימוּ Qal Perf 3p masc. plural of רום ("to be crafty")	
		Sillûq	4b	7	they consult together against your treasured ones.	and they plan against the ones who shelter in you.	וְ֝יִתְיָעֲצ֗וּ עַל־צְפוּנֶֽיךָ׃	וְיִתְיָעֲצ֗וּ waw conjunctive + Hithpael Imperfect 3 masc sing of יעץ ("to plan, consult") עַל־צְפוּנֶֽיךָ article of negation + Qal Passive Participle masculine plural of צפן ("to hide, she	
		'Atnāḥ	5a	8	They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation;	They say, "Come! Let us make them disappear from (among) people	אָמְר֗וּ לְ֭כוּ וְנַכְחִידֵ֣ם מִגּ֑וֹי	אָמְר֗וּ Qal Imperfect 3p masc pl of אמר ("to say") לְ֭כוּ Qal Imperative 2 pl masc of הלך (to go, lead") וְנַכְחִידֵ֣ם Waw Conjunctive + Hiphil Imperative 1pm of כחד ("to hold, hide, conceal, make	
		Sillûq	5b	9	let the name of Israel be remembered no more!"	And/so (it) will not be remembered, the name of Israel, any longer	וְלֹֽא־יִזָּכֵ֖ר שֵֽׁם־יִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל עֽוֹד׃	יִזָּכֵ֖ר Niphal Imperfect 3 masc sing. Of זכר ("to remember")	
		'Atnāḥ	6a	10	For they conspire with one accord;	Because they plan (in) heart together	כִּ֤י נוֹעֲצ֣וּ לֵ֣ב יַחְדָּ֑ו	נוֹעֲצ֣וּ Niphal Perfect 3 pl of יעץ ("to plan")	
		Sillûq	6b	11	against you they make a covenant-	against you they cut a covenant	עָ֝לֶ֗יךָ בְּרִ֣ית יִכְרֹֽתוּ׃	יִכְרֹֽתוּ Qal Imperfect 3 masc pl of כרת ("to cut, exterminate, come to agreement")	
		Rᵉḇⁱᵃ gāḏôl	7a	12	the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,	the tents of Edom, and (the Ishmaelites,	אָהֳלֵ֣י אֱ֭דוֹם וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִ֑ים		
		Sillûq	7b	13	Moab and the Hagrites,	Moab and (the) Hagrites	מוֹאָ֥ב וְהַגְרִֽים׃		
B	II	'Atnāḥ	8a	14	Gebal and Ammon and Amalek	Gebal and Ammon and Amalek	גְּבָ֣ל וְ֭עַמּוֹן וַעֲמָלֵ֑ק		
		Sillûq	8b	15	Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;	Philistia and the ones who dwell in Tyre	פְּ֝לֶ֗שֶׁת עִם־יֹ֥שְׁבֵי צֽוֹר׃	יֹ֥שְׁבֵי QAL masc plural participle of ישׁב ("to dwell, to inhabit")	
		'Atnāḥ	9a	16	Asshur also has joined them;	Also (even) Asshur has enjoined with them	גַּם־אַ֭שּׁוּר נִלְוָ֣ה עִמָּ֑ם	נִלְוָ֣ה QAL perf 3m sing of לוה ("to accompany, to enjoin")	
		Sillûq	9b	17	they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. Selah	They are (the) force (strength, arm)	הָ֤יוּ זְר֖וֹעַ לִבְנֵי־ל֣וֹט סֶֽלָה׃	הָ֤יוּ QAL Perf 3 pl of היה ("to be")	

Results of strophic and disjunctive analysis tabulated, including verb parsing; part 2:

Stanza	Strophe	Dividing Disjunctive	Verse	Line	ESV	Literal and Direct Translation	Verb	Verbal Parsing
		'Atnāḥ	10a	18	Do to them as you did to Midian,	Do to them like Midian	עֲשֵׂה	QAL Imperative 2masc sing of עשׂה ("to do")
		Sillûq	10b	19	as to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon,	like Sisera, like Jabin, at (the) river Kishon		
		'Atnāḥ	11a	20	who were destroyed at En-dor,	They were destroyed at En-dor	נִשְׁמְדוּ	Niph Perf 3masc pl of שׁמד ("to destroy, exterminate")
		Sillûq	11b	21	who became dung for the ground.	they became dung for/to the earth	הָיוּ	QAL Perf 3 pl of היה ("to be, to become")
C	III	'Atnāḥ	12a	22	Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,	Ordain (cause) their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb	שִׁיתֵמוֹ	QAL Imperative 2m sing of שׁית ("to set, place, ordain")
		Sillûq	12b	23	all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,	Like Zevah and like Zalmunna all the...		
		'Atnāḥ	13a	24	who said, "Let us take possession for ourselves	Who said, "let us take possession for ourselves …"	אָמְרוּ נִירְשָׁה	QAL Perf 3 pl of אמר, "to say" / QAL Imperfect Cohortative 1 pl of ירשׁ ("to take possession, to dispossess")
		Sillûq	13b	25	of the pastures of God."	"… the grazing places (pastures, s...		
		'Atnāḥ	14a	26	O my God, make them like whirling dust,	My God, cause to occur (ordain) the...	שִׁיתֵמוֹ	QAL imperative 2masc sing of שׁית ("cause to occur, ordain" + מ)
		Sillûq	14b	27	like chaff before the wind.	like chaff before the wind		
		'Atnāḥ	15a	28	As fire consumes the forest,	Like fire consumes a forest	תִּבְעַר	QAL Imperfect 3f sing of בער ("to consume, burn, scorch")
		Sillûq	15b	29	as the flame sets the mountains ablaze,	and like a flame sets ablaze the mo...	תְּלַהֵט	Piel Impf 3f sing. Of להט ("to blaze, scorch, devour")
D	IV	'Atnāḥ	16a	30	so may you pursue them with your tempest	So you pursue them with your temp...	תִּרְדְּפֵם	QAL Impf 2m sing. Of רדף ("to pursue") + מ
		Sillûq	16b	31	and terrify them with your hurricane!	and with your hurricane terrify them	תְּבַהֲלֵם	Piel Impf 2masc. Pl of בהל ("to terrify") + מ
		'Atnāḥ	17a	32	Fill their faces with shame,	Fill their faces with shame	מַלֵּא	Piel Imperative 2masc sing. Of מלא, "to fill"
		Sillûq	17b	33	that they may seek your name, O Lord.	And (that) they may seek your nam...	וִיבַקְשׁוּ	Piel imperfect 3masc pl of בקשׁ, "to seek"
		Rᵉḇⁱ gādôl	18a	34	Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever;	Let them be shamed and let them b...	יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ	QAL Juss Imperfect 3masc pl of בושׁ, "to shame" / Niphal Juss Imperfect 3masc pl of בהל, "to be dismayed"
		Sillûq / 'Atnāḥ	18b	35	let them perish in disgrace,	let them have disgrace and let them...	וְיַחְפְּרוּ	QAL Imperfect Jussive 3masc pl of חפר ("to be disgraced")
E	Envoi	Rᵉḇⁱ gādôl	19a	36	that they may know that you alone,	And let them know	וְיֵדְעוּ	QAL Imperfect Jussive 3masc pl of ידע ("to know")
		'Atnāḥ	19b	37	whose name is the Lord,	That you, your name, is YHWH, you...		
		Sillûq	19c	38	are the Most High over all the earth.	(You are) Elyon (Most High) over all...		

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